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**LAND OF NO REGRETS**

*By the Same Author*  
**THE DEVIL'S FINGER**  
*A Romance of Ancient India*

# LAND OF NO REGRETS

LT. - COL. A. A. IRVINE, C.I.E.



COLLINS · PUBLISHERS  
FORTY-EIGHT · PALL MALL · LONDON  
1938

THIS BOOK IS SET IN FONTANA, A NEW TYPE  
FACE DESIGNED FOR THE EXCLUSIVE USE OF THE  
HOUSE OF COLLINS, AND PRINTED BY THEM  
IN GREAT BRITAIN

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*To my Friends,  
English and Indian*



## AUTHOR'S NOTE

When I was a subaltern at Cawnpore, a missionary gentleman drove up to my bungalow in a dilapidated cab and took from me a small subscription. Having done this, he thrust into my hand a tract; and in order to arouse my interest in it hissed into my ear the word "Tigers!" Moreover, he assured me that it had been written with "a pleasant pen"; and the phrase took my fancy.

I have endeavoured to write these reminiscences with "a pleasant pen." My success or failure lies, as my Indian Babu friends would say, "upon the knee of God."



## CHAPTER I

SIR ALFRED LYALL, who had a very distinguished career in India, wrote some verses (presumably, when he was feeling bilious) in which he labelled that country 'Land of Regret'. In spite of my thirty-two years of Indian service it has never been that to me.

My only regret with regard to India is that so many of my fellow-countrymen appear to know so deplorably little about that great Empire. For the most part they look upon it as a vast, torrid expanse inhabited mainly by tigers and snakes and babus, which Bishop Heber for reasons best known to himself credited with a 'coral strand'. The line of the hymn which avers that 'only man is vile' is understandable; because from Point de Galle a gentleman of Sinhalese extraction swam out from the shore and looted his cabin.

Some years ago, seated one day in a 'bus, I saw through the window two stalwart Sikh soldiers, part of a contingent in England for the coming Coronation celebrations. I enlightened the intelligent-looking British working-man sitting next to me as to who they were.

"Ar!" he remarked reflectively, "ar, yes!—I 'ave 'eard of them Sikes."

Yet he was a British voter entitled to use his vote, should the occasion arise, in respect of the future of India! No doubt, when the time came he would vote according to the instructions of his Member of Parliament: and his M.P. in nine cases out of ten would be quite as ignorant of the subject as he was himself.

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I was fortunate in having old associations with India. For well over one hundred years members of my family, Irvines, Thackerays, Shakespears and Lows have served in and loved 'The Shiny'.

There was my grandfather, a Sapper, who in 1825 had taken part in the siege of Bhurtpore; and who twenty-one years later had joined Viscount Hardinge's camp the night before the battle of Sobraon as Chief Engineer. In his speech in the House of Commons Sir Robert Peel made a graceful reference to him; and he retired in time to take charge of the fortification of Somerset House against the Chartist rioters.

There was my father, who passed from the old East India College at Haileybury into the Madras Civil Service.

There was William Makepeace Thackeray, the novelist, my grandmother's first cousin, who was born in 1811 in Calcutta. Some of his letters and sketches are among my cherished possessions. There is a small pencil drawing of him in bed, accepting an invitation to dinner. There is an illustrated three-page letter in French. Above all, there are three pen-and-ink sketches touched up with red pencil, which he drew in 1852 when he was writing 'Esmond.' They were done during one rainy afternoon, when he was spending a day with my grandmother, Mrs. Irvine, and her sister, Miss Shakespear, at Rustington Common near Tunbridge Wells.

There was another William Makepeace Thackeray who in 1774, when in charge of Sylhet in Assam, contracted to sell to 'John Company' sixty-two elephants at one thousand rupees each. He delivered them at Patna in good order; but forty-six of them afterwards died on the road to Belgaum in charge of the Company's men. A dispute took place, but Thackeray eventually obtained a decree for the full

balance owing from the Supreme Court. His honourable part in this affair is referred to in the 'Farington Diaries'; and but for it Warren Hastings might have suffered even worse trouble than befell him.

Another cousin, Colonel Sir Richmond Shakespear, was knighted, while still a Gunner subaltern, for having in 1840 safely conveyed to Orenburg on the Caspian four hundred and sixteen Russian subjects held captive in Turkestan by the Khan of Khiva. Later on he was to take part in the release of our own countrymen held prisoners in Kabul; and he was present at the battles of Chillianwala and Gujerat. His journal of his trip to Orenburg was printed in *Blackwood's Magazine* in June of 1842.

Then there was General Sir John Low, for eleven years Resident at Lucknow, who by his courage and tact quelled the 'Tumult at Lucknow' in 1837, when on the death of a King of Oudh the Pādshāh Begam endeavoured to place by force her boy-nominee upon the throne. Sir John died at the ripe age of ninety-one; and after his retirement was the only person allowed, on account of his years, to ride a pony between strokes on the Royal and Ancient golf-course at St. Andrew's. A most interesting account of his life, entitled: *Fifty Years with John Company*—written by his granddaughter, Miss Ursula Low, was published not long ago by Messrs. John Murray.

Mutiny times recall the names of other relations: General Sir Robert Low, who many years later commanded the Chitral Relief Force; General Sir John Murray, who raised Murray's Jat Horse; Colonel Sir Edward Thackeray, who won the V.C. for a most gallant act at Delhi. And there was my wife's father, General James Mayne, who was also the possessor of the Crimea (Turkish) medal and the Order of the Mejidieh.

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slipped and damaged a leg, he plastered it with cow-dung.

During the year of 1875 King Edward the VIIth, who was then Prince of Wales, paid a visit to India; and I was taken to the Madras Club to witness the procession. I do not recollect much about it, excitement and a surfeit of ice-cream having rendered me somewhat indisposed and dulled temporarily my powers of observation. I remember more clearly two years later the terrible Madras famine, when our English nurse dragged us hastily away from the spectacle of starving skeletons from the villages crawling along the roadsides to relief headquarters. Twenty years afterwards I was to be myself on famine-duty; but under very different conditions.

From time to time there were pleasant drives in a great landau over the border to Pondicherry in French territory. There kindly old Monsieur de Lautrec loaded us with boxes of Parisian bonbons. After one of these visits my mother found a small white sugar-plum lying on a table and popped it into her mouth. She felt a horrifying wriggle, and I acquired my first item of Natural History knowledge—that lizards lay eggs.

We returned to England along with a baby sister born in India. What I best remember about the voyage was our fishing. A friendly tar supplied us small fry with hooks and lines; and with them we fished from the upper deck into the saloon while the grown-ups were at dinner. We made rich catches of crystallised fruit and ginger until one day a tiresome old gentleman, mistaking the bobbing hook for a mosquito, slapped viciously at it and put an end to our fishing.

My brother and I were left at my grandmother's house; and not long afterwards came the news of my father's death from the bite of a wounded cheetah

which he had insisted on walking up to when on a *shikār* expedition with his friend, the Maharaja of Vizianagram. There had been the long, slow journey from the jungle under a broiling sun; and antiseptic surgery was not then what it is now. Curiously enough, though he had been on many such expeditions, he had made his Will on a sheet of notepaper just before starting off.

He was a first-rate man at his job; a man with a host of friends; good at games, gifted with a fine tenor voice and a talent for writing humorous verse. He was, likewise, an expert performer with the razor-strop if I or my brother told a lie, the only offence for which we were ever beaten.

A memory of those boyhood days concerns the extraordinary part I played in spreading the Gospel in Wiltshire. My mother took me with her on a visit to a cousin, Lady Rawlinson, who had a fine place at Swindon and was greatly addicted to performing good works. Every afternoon we drove forth in a big barouche complete with coachman and footman. Much to the indignation of her husband, Sir Christopher, a handsome aristocratic old gentleman who never forgot that he had formerly been Chief Justice of Ceylon, the seat beside mine would be piled high with cheap Bibles and prayer-books, to each of which had been tied a packet of tea or sugar. It was my job to hurl these at the doors of cottages as we passed by. The idea was ingenious: the cottagers would be so delighted with the tea and sugar that they would sit down to peruse the spiritual portions of their presents! Not infrequently a packet would alight on a stone and explode. I enjoyed myself hugely.

At the age of ten and a half I went to my first school, in Suffolk; and there followed for me three years of a minor Hell.

This was due to two individuals: the Reverend R—— who was the headmaster, and a fat over-grown freckle-faced oaf who bore the loathed name of 'Tubby' Hickling. The Reverend R—— was cursed with the schoolmaster's worst vice, the gift of sarcasm. The average small boy hates, just as much as does a Pathan, being held up as an object of ridicule before his fellows; and he has not the Pathan's remedy, the cutting of his enemy's throat. 'Tubby' Hickling was an expert in bullying, both mental and physical; and during my first years in India I sometimes thought of the time when I would go home on furlough, tell the Reverend R—— exactly what I thought of him, and administer to 'Tubby', who must have grown into a fat freckle-faced man, the chastisement which had for so long been his due. But my opportunity never came; for both of them, as the Irish say, 'died on me'.

Out of the shades of this prison-house there waddles into my recollection another master; an astoundingly obese Frenchman named Monsieur Pringet. We boys soon learned that 'Prinjy's' god was his stomach: and this knowledge was useful. One approached his desk, holding in one hand a blotted atrocity of an exercise and in the other a ripe pear. Being perhaps unacquainted with the French word for 'pear', one casually displayed the luscious fruit beneath his desk muttering: "*Mossoo, un pom!*" A pudgy fist would close over the dainty, and the disastrous exercise would pass muster. I learned very little French from 'Prinjy'; and my favourite French expletive— "*Tonnerre de bonsoir de sac à papier!*"—I acquired much later: I think, from Monsieur Guitry.

I had almost forgotten the dancing-master, another Frenchman! My mother, always anxious to do the best for us, decided that my brother and I should be

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instructed in the terpsichorean art; so once a week we and other wretched lads attended at the Town Hall, where we were brigaded with a number of pert little girls! The proceedings used to commence with a few lady-like exercises performed with an elastic expander, and till these were concluded we used to hide down a cellar. The spectacle of the poor Frenchman, with his little pointed beard, skipping about playing a fiddle and pointing his toes shod with dancing-pumps, aroused in us nothing but contempt, and the only fun we could extract out of these dismal operations was gained by strewing some small shot over the floor.

I am exceedingly fond of music; but my musical education was equally hopeless. At my first school the teacher was usually half-seas-over: and at my second he was an old German, who smelt frowstily and cracked one over the fingers with a ruler. Moreover, one's music lessons always took place in one's legitimate playtime. I dare say things are managed better nowadays.

It sometimes occurs to me how very little learning I accumulated during my seven years of schooling. It was not that I was particularly stupid or lazy; but simply because the subjects taught did not really interest me.

For six years I studied Greek; and all that remains to me of that very dead language is one line, the usual one, of Homer. My chief bugbear was a worthy Athenian general named Xenophon. He wrote, I believe, a quantity of books mainly concerned with the number of 'parasangs' marched daily by his soldiery. I struggled after the general on several of his parasanguinary expeditions; and I cannot see that I derived any benefit from so doing.

To be sure, one of my three school prizes was for

Greek Testament. I did not deserve it; and I owe it to an excellent aunt, who on Sunday mornings would cause me and my brother to learn passages of Scripture before settling down to such mundane literature as *The Fairchild Family*, *The Swiss Family Robinson* and *Froggy's Little Brother*. When the examination paper was placed in front of me I recognised here and there a word, and so was able to write out the entire passage from memory. I received (at the age of twelve) by way of guerdon a book with the singular title of *Blunt's Coincidences*. It is most handsomely bound; and for upwards of fifty years has occupied an honoured place on my bookshelves. I intend, one of these days, to look inside it and ascertain what it is about.

Latin certainly helped me into Sandhurst; but most of my Latin, along with the Binomial Theorem and a mass of historical dates (for some inscrutable reason there still abides with me—‘Anne—1702’), has long since vanished from my memory. In India I acquired three oriental languages and somewhat of a fourth; and I did this with pleasure, *because they would be useful to me*. For similar reasons, after leaving school, I taught myself what I know of French, German and Italian. But what a terrible amount of time had been wasted on non-essentials! Probably the two most pleasant jobs in this world are those of a pet dog and a pensioned king; but since few of us can aspire to either of these, a boy nowadays should specialise early.

Every school has its humorist; and ours was the nephew of that once well-known entertainer, Corney Grain. Early in 1882 the newspapers were full of the Phoenix Park murders after Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke, chief secretary and under-secretary for Ireland, had been foully assassinated. Corney Grain’s nephew went round the school taking up a collection for a monument to be raised to the memory of the

wo victims. Most unwillingly we small boys parted with our twopences; and Corney Grain's nephew faithfully erected the monument—of chocolate—in his stomach!

At about the same time I became first acquainted with the wiles of the professional confidence trickster. In a newspaper I came across an advertisement which read as follows:

*‘Two Pounds Weekly and Upwards* may be honestly and easily realised by persons of either sex, without hindrance to present occupation. Send one shilling, etc., etc.’

This seemed to me to foreshadow an admirable scheme for supplementing my fourpence a week of pocket-money; and I duly despatched my shilling. In return for it I received a watch-charm—a tiny leaden pistol thinly covered with gold paint. With it came a printed notice informing me that for a further sum of ten shillings I should receive a gross of similar articles, which I should be at liberty to retail to relations and friends at half a crown apiece. I did not pursue the matter further; but the point of the story is this: twelve years later in our Mess at Cawnpore I found this fraud, with the identical wording, being exposed in the columns of *Truth*. The trickster had had a good innings before his exposure.

Escaping from the prison house I spent four of the best years of my life at that splendid public school, Haileybury. The petty tyrannies of the ‘prep’ school were over; and there was not a master whom I did not like. To two of them in particular, Messrs. Ash and Milford, I owe a debt of gratitude; for without pedagogy they led me to see that there was much to be said for English literature, even for poetry.

Like most of the big schools, Haileybury has turned out its share of well-known men. Lord Allenby

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(my Army Commander in France) was there before my time; but besides a perfect bagful of future bishops we had many others who made their mark in after life. One of them, in my house (Trevelyan), is now Sir Montagu Butler, ex-Governor of an Indian Province and till recently Lieutenant-Governor of the Isle of Man. General Sir Thomas Astley Cubitt, lately Governor of the Bermudas, was a school friend. Colonel Mansel Jones, who won his V.C. in the Boer War, gave me my baptism of fire by letting off his Snider against my fingers at a Public Schools field day in the Long Valley. A tragic recollection is that of poor Erskine Childers, who was also in my house and for a time was head of the school. The man who wrote *The Riddle of the Sands* and gained the D.S.C. in the Great War could have been nothing but a patriot; and it is pitiful to think that in 1922 he was shot as a rebel by the Free State Government.

It was during my Haileybury days that I achieved my first literary success, whilst on holiday in the Isle of Wight. The prize was a two-pound pot of jam, offered weekly by a local paper for the best joke sent them not necessarily original. Mine, culled from an American magazine, ran thus:

*Man (entering shop in search of work):* "I say, Mister, I don't suppose as how you don't know nobody what don't want no one to do nothing for nobody, nohow, don't you?"

*Proprietor:* "Yes, I guess not."

Fired by my success, I produced at my own expense a booklet about the school, following the example of my friend, Mr. E. F. Benson, the distinguished novelist-Mayor of our little town of Rye. His concerned Marlborough. My booklet sold quite well at the

school bookshop until it was officially banned. I have always suspected that the banning was on account of certain irreverent remarks about the school system; but I have been told that it was feared that my reference to a certain amusement of the inhabitants of the Studies might shock tender-hearted parents! The game, invented by a boy whose fancy had been tickled by a phrase in one of the Psalms, was popularly known as 'Having Earwigs in Derision'. Innumerable earwigs used to crawl out of the Study window-boxes, and to 'deride' an earwig you applied a lighted scrap of paper to his tail—whereupon he frizzled.

After Haileybury there came another good period at a crammer's in Brussels.

Brussels is a fine town; there was a big English colony; and in addition to tennis, football and skating in their seasons, there was no lack of intellectual amusement. Melba was in her early "star days" at the Monnaie; and Ysaye, the great violinist, was the "star" teacher at the Conservatoire. The chief difficulty of his pupils was to get him out of bed for their lessons.

There were two delightful summer holidays in the charming little village of Houffalize in the Ardennes, where I lived royally on about half a crown a day; and where, in spite of my youth, the Maire invited me to an entertainment in my honour as a young English visitor. We drank glasses of *pekke*, a frightful brand of aniseed brandy; and the village band brayed within six feet of our ears.

Brussels is the only place where, involuntarily, I have performed in a circus ring. There was a fine circus, and we made friends with the old proprietor. One evening we found him in much perturbation. "Meester Sharlie Bai-ai-rr-d," a friend of ours, he said, had made his way into the ring round which he was

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kicking his opera hat. Would we kindly remove him? We did so; and were rewarded by paragraphs in the newspapers describing the gross impertinence offered by certain young Englishmen to Her Majesty the Queen of the Belgians! Needless to say, we had had no idea that Her Majesty was in the royal box; our only aim being to remove Mr. Charlie Baird from the scene of his activities.

*En route* for Sandhurst I spent some months at another crammer's at Ealing, one of the pupils being a burly, genial soul, who was destined to command a famous regiment of British Cavalry. We will call him Colonel N—— H——; and there is a story about him worth repeating. In the kindness of his heart he once paid a week-end visit to the country house of a rather terrible *nouveau riche*. Much to his annoyance he found his host inclined to gush over him: "Colonel H—— this," and "Colonel H—— that," and "Colonel H—— what is *your* opinion?" The climax was reached when it became time to dress for dinner, and his host, summoning one of the dozen flunkeys who were hovering about, pompously commanded: "Show Colonel N—— H—— to the green marble bathroom!" As he left the room the guest turned and with his fascinating stutter remarked: "Th-thank you so much! B-but I do hope I shan't s-scratch my b-backside on any of the d-diamonds!"

From this seminary, after Saturday's rugger, we often visited Gatti's Music Hall, where a Chairman who was more of a tank than a human being would beat upon a marble-topped table and bawl out the next 'turn'.

Belle Bilton (afterwards Countess of Clancarty) and her sister Flo were the bright, particular stars. One evening one of our number purchased an extremely costly bouquet, which he tossed from our box upon

the stage. The gallery, doubtless regarding us as young sprigs of the Idle Rich, threw orange peel at us; but Belle with a charming smile waved her thanks to the donor. Delighted, he rushed round to the stage-door in time to see that most kind-hearted lady breaking up his offering for the benefit of some ragged loafers, who presumably reaped a profit from the flowers in the streets next morning.

I passed into Sandhurst thirtieth; my quota of marks including 13 out of a possible 500 awarded me by a humorist examiner for my freehand drawing of a fir-cone.

On the night of my arrival at the College I experienced a severe shock. In the list of articles of uniform required by each cadet I had noticed one item: 'Springside boots—to be supplied at the College.' I had imagined myself swaggering about in highly polished top-boots reaching to the knee. To my chagrin I found placed beside my mess-kit a dreadful pair of patent leather boots with pieces of elastic let in at the sides; in other words 'Jemimas', the type of footgear much in favour with charwomen! But there were other surprises at Sandhurst; it was, I should imagine, the only place in the whole world where a pennyworth of milk for tea was sold in a paper bag.

'E' Company, to which I belonged for the two terms, was a company of giants. Our right-hand man registered six feet six inches; and my friend, now General Sir Jocelyn Percy, for several years chief of the Albanian *gendarmerie*, was only No. 3. I, with my miserable six feet, was No. 6 of the front rank. My passage out of Sandhurst was not glorious; probably owing to the fact that I displayed more zeal with the Rugger XV than in the study of fortification and topography.

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While waiting for my commission I spent part of the summer in Norway; and there made my first acquaintance with the genius of the Master-Writer on Things Indian.

In a small, out-of-the-way hotel a fellow-guest was the late Sir James Agg Gardner, who for many years was one of the best-known members of the House of Commons. Not long before his name had been much in the papers. He, along with a Colonel Templer and a Mr. Powell, had gone up in a balloon. As the balloon began to descend near Bridport he and Templer were flung out sustaining injuries, while Powell was carried out to sea and disappeared.

When I met Agg Gardner he was salmon fishing; and having caught three salmon calculated that they had cost him ninety pounds apiece. In the hotel, one wet afternoon, he handed me a book saying: "You're going out to India soon. Here's a book by a new writer which will interest you." It did: for it was *Plain Tales from the Hills*.

On my walks abroad I used often to see an elderly man with a shock of grey hair tramping along the roads, scribbling on paper and humming and gibbering to himself. His gibbering and humming resulted in music which delights me almost as much as that of Chopin; for his name was Edvard Hagerup Grieg.

In July of 1891 I joined the 1st Battalion of the Lincolnshire Regiment, under canvas at Shorncliffe. The regiment was of course formerly the old 10th Foot; and doubtless my grandfather must have seen it in 1846, leading the attack at Sobraon.

Two months later we found ourselves stationed in the North Camp at Aldershot. This suited me capitally, because, having returned in great fettle from the autumn manœuvres, I was selected to play in the first

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team of the 'Harlequins.' Our team included two Rugger Internationals—A. A. Surtees and Leake.

In December of that year three of us left for India with a draft for the 2nd Battalion. In due course we sailed on board the old 'trooper' *Crocodile*; it being, I think, the last voyage to the East of that unspeakably rickety old tub. On her return voyage, being out of control, she carried away part of a landing-stage; and this puts me in mind of the story of the lady and the old sea-dog who was venting his scorn on a brother skipper of a vessel on the China run, who had met with a similar mishap. "The damn fool!" he roared. "What d'you suppose he did? Carried away twelve feet of the jetty!" "Really?" said the lady reflectively; then added: "But surely, captain, that was a very little bit after coming all the way from China?"

In those days the quarters of the rank and file on board a 'trooper' were indescribably bad. It was no fun being officer on duty during a stormy night in the Bay of Biscay. Feeling far from robust oneself, one went groping after a naval rating carrying a lantern among a medley of sea-sick men, women and children herded below decks; and 'Judy O'Grady' did not scruple to tell the 'young orficer' exactly what she thought about having a lantern flashed in her face in the middle of her sorrows.

We subalterns existed in slightly superior squalor on the deck below the 'Horse-Boxes', in which were lodged the married couples and persons of superior rank. Our quarters were known as the 'Pandemonium'; and were in the bowels of the ship, literally beneath the surface of the sea. They were lighted eternally by artificial light; and it was rather like living in an aquarium—but smelt much worse!

By the time we reached Malta, the old *Crocodile* was in such a state of dilapidation that we made a

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stay of three days there for minor repairs. We saw the sights of the island; attended a ball; and visited the fine Opera House, where a famous Italian singer was performing. During our previous dinner at an hotel he made such a noise practising his scales in an adjoining room that we took a box at the Opera and helped him with his solos—thereby becoming decidedly unpopular.

One of the pleasantest of our fellow-passengers was Viscount Fincastle (now the Earl of Dunmore). Six years later he was to win his V.C. on the Indian frontier; but what interested us at the time was that he had six polo-saddles in the hold. We set him down as a millionaire.

In due course, we rolled and pitched and wallowed to Bombay. A year or so later I was moved to write a would-be humorous account of the voyage, to be entitled *Troopship Sketches*. Some most amusing illustrations for it were done by my friend, now Major-General Sir Ernest Swinton, 'Eye-Witness' of the Great War, sponsor of Tanks, 'Ole-Luk-Oie' of *The Green Curve*. But the book never got as far as publication.

## CHAPTER II

EARLY in January we disembarked at Bombay; and the same night the Indian Government mulcted me in the sum of twenty-seven rupees four annas. This affair reminded me of 'John Company' times, when a man on arrival in India used to be docked twenty-four rupees for his coffin!

It fell to my lot to be officer in charge of the train which was to convey us to Deolali rest-camp (the 'Doodle-Alley' of Thomas Atkins). In the small hours we arrived there, and the sleepy drafts were marched off to camp. Before I could leave the platform a Eurasian station-master waylaid me bearing a printed official list. He explained that he and I had to go through the train and assess any damage done during the journey from Bombay.

There had been some damage, due to boredom (the '*cafard*' in after years of the French trenches). A few seats had been slit up; a few windows had been broken; and some plugs had been wrenched out of the washing-basins. The cost of these appeared on the printed list; and he explained that it was my business to pay the amount, take his receipt and apply for a refund at the Government Treasury on reaching my ultimate destination. On arrival, therefore, at Bareilly I presented the receipt; and the folks at the Treasury told me that it was quite in order, but that what I had to do was to apportion the damage between the various drafts and then apply for a refund to the C.O. of each regiment. As a newly-arrived 2nd Lieutenant, I could see myself doing this!—and I let the matter slide. Six years later, as a Political in an Indian State, I took my revenge.

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One of the curiosities of Deolali rest-camp was its billiard-table. It is probably there still. It is the only one I have seen on which it was possible to pinch up the cloth between one's fingers; and the 'snooker' balls were the kind of which it has been said that "the marker knows the colour by the shape".

From there we went on to Jhansi, regarding which place an American tourist once remarked to me that it was always "110 degrees in the shade—and no shade". Having a day off, a brother subaltern and I set forth on our first *shikār*. It was also our first ride in a *band-gāri*, the Indian 'growler' which, along with the *fitan* (phaeton) *gāri*, was the ordinary public conveyance for Europeans before the advent of the motor-car. The *fitan* was superior to the *band*, in that whereas the *fitan* smelt of monkeys, the *band* smelt of dead monkeys. In this ramshackle vehicle we drove many miles to a *jheel*—a vast expanse of shallow water on which quantities of wild fowl were disporting themselves. We shot a number of them and returned triumphantly to camp, to be greeted with the jeers of an 'old-timer', who pointed out that our 'bag' consisted almost entirely of coots.

My companion was Barlow, a very gallant fellow. His grandfather had served in the Lincolns, and his father had commanded the regiment. During the Great War he insisted on joining the regiment in Belgium, though he was so blind that he had to be led about by his batman. He was killed at Wytschaete in November of 1914.

The 2nd Battalion of the Lincolns was at that time stationed at Bareilly in the North-western (now the United) Provinces. It was commanded by Colonel Glen, a giant whose gigantic charger after his departure was advertised as being "suitable for a Rajah for processional purposes".

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Bareilly was a pleasant station, with pig-sticking and snipe-shooting handy; likewise many picnics and dances, the belle of the station being the daughter of Mrs. B. M. Croker, the well-known Indian novelist. I gained some popularity at the regimental theatre by endeavouring to sing Mr. Albert Chevalier's coster songs, which were then new to the country. From there my first Indian 'bearer' (foolishly engaged on board the boat) absconded with part of my wardrobe. This, however, did not deter him from calling at my bungalow in Cawnpore two years later, when on his way up-country with another dupe, and presenting me with a box of mouldy cigarettes, two pairs of boot-laces and a *carte-de-visite* of himself.

When the hot weather came on, half the battalion was sent up to Chaubattia, a hill-station for troops on the slopes of the Himalayas. We officers were quite happy; but the men for the most part loathed it. For us there were plenty of amusements; feminine society; trips to Naini Tal, the summer headquarters of a Lieutenant-Governor, where we could row and yacht on the lake. The men missed the din and jostle of the *bazārs*, the *bazār* chaffering and the *bazār* women. When the monsoon broke, the unending rattle of rain on the tin roofs of their quarters seemed to get on their nerves, affecting them as it did the characters in Somerset Maugham's story. There are, surely, few more dreary sounds than that of rain falling—falling—falling; and one can appreciate the feelings of the Chinese poet who wrote one of the most dismal lines of poetry ever written:

"Drearly falls the rain on the hat I stole from  
a scarecrow."

When things became somewhat tense, the C.O.

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summoned some of us younger folk and told us that unless we set to work to keep the men contented we should be sent down to the plains. So we set to work on boxing tournaments and theatricals.

I had at the time two boxing instructors, whose terms for a lesson were a rupee and a bottle of beer. One was a corporal in the Rifle Brigade; and the other was armourer-sergeant of the East Lancashire Regiment. The latter (who had been a third-class 'bruiser') was not allowed, on account of his losing his temper, to box with the men. With an officer he went no further than hissing truculently through his teeth; and the men enjoyed seeing him knock me and the adjutant about. Our theatrical performances consisted mainly of variety turns; one of which was provided by a brother officer (an expert swordsman) and myself. Clad in ridiculous royal robes, I knelt with my head on a block, and he cut an apple in two on the back of my neck. For no other reason than that it raised a smile, it was billed on the programme as 'Mary Queen of Scots being vaccinated'.

There was, however, more serious trouble when it became known that the regiment, instead of proceeding Home, was to spend two years in the Straits. Some of the 'bad hats' committed deliberate acts of insubordination, hoping for terms of imprisonment which would automatically result in their dismissal from the Army. One or two of them threw down their rifles on parade; but the queerest case was that of a man to whom the Colonel awarded a few days' C.B. Before he could be removed from the Orderly Room, he had told the C.O. at the top of his voice exactly what he thought of him and his wife; ending whilst he was being hauled backwards through the doorway with the cryptic utterance—*"and yer dog's a meeter!"* The sergeant-major explained this. The

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'bad hat,' having expressed his opinion of the Colonel and his lady, wished to imply that even the Colonel's dog was an animal of such low breeding that it was only fitted to belong to the lowest type of regimental scavenger—the *mehtar*.

As the Lincolns were under orders for the Straits, three of us departed to join what was then known as the Indian Staff Corps; and I found myself posted to the 3rd Bengal Infantry stationed at Fort William in Calcutta.

Our C.O. was Colonel Skinner; one of the old type of officer who in remote frontier stations would drill his regiment from the roof of his bungalow clad in his pyjamas. In those desolate spots most of the officers were married; and the Mess was handed over to a swarm of ayahs and babies, who rolled the billiard-balls about on the floor.

The Colonel had his peculiarities, one of which was the wearing of a beard. Another was his habit, when on the line of march, of partaking at his early breakfast round about 5 a.m. of plum-cake and green Chartreuse. But there was nothing wrong with his nerves! Shortly before my arrival a sepoy had run amuck and shot two of his comrades. The Colonel had walked out to him alone on the open parade-ground and ordered him to give up his rifle. This the madman refused to do; but said that if the Colonel would walk in front of him to the guard-room he would give himself up there. Without saying another word the Colonel complied; but had he looked back over his shoulder the madman would undoubtedly have shot him.

Just before I reached Calcutta a terrible tragedy had occurred in the Hughli river. A steamer overturned and tons of coal shifted and became jammed against the door of the crew's quarters. The crew were

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entrapped and there were only four portholes above water, through which they thrust their heads. The ship lay on her starboard side, and owing to the pressure of the coal against the fo'c'sle door, which was under water, they could not escape, nor was it possible to rescue them. The accident occurred about four o'clock in the afternoon, and while the tide was ebbing they were in no immediate danger of drowning, but the pilot knew that unless they could be rescued within four hours they would be drowned by the rising tide.

Frantic efforts were made with sledge-hammers and cold chisels to remove the heavy plates round the portholes, but the efforts were unsuccessful. As darkness came lamps were lighted to remove the tension, but the wind extinguished them. Time and again did the wretched men, trapped in an iron cage, beg that they should be relighted. The hours dragged on, and at last the rush of the tide reached the portholes and put an end to their slow agony.

There was good polo in Calcutta; in spite of the heat, there was Rugger during the Rains; and when the weather became cooler there were the Paper-chases. One of the hardest riders in these was a journalist, now a sports correspondent on one of our best-known illustrated papers. When Lord Elgin became Viceroy, this Nimrod found himself involved in trouble with Government House. It had always been the custom for the Viceroy to be mounted at the Proclamation Parade on New Year's Day; but Lord Elgin, who loathed horses, decided to drive in a carriage. In a Calcutta newspaper there appeared a skit from the Nimrod's pen in which the Viceroy in broad Scotch explained his objections to riding, whilst an A.D.C. in tears on his knees before him

unfolded a plan for securing His Excellency to his horse with invisible wire.

In the Eden Gardens, where of an evening the rank and fashion used to congregate, I noticed a strange and salutary custom which I have never known to be copied elsewhere. Among the mass of dogcarts and buggies one would see here and there a vehicle on the back seat of which sat a dejected-looking syce (groom) wearing his native clothes, but crowned with an old top-hat. To have fined such a one for a misdemeanour would have meant hardship for his family; whereas, making him wear an old top-hat merely meant ridicule from his fellow-syces which he would remember.

Before I left Calcutta I decided, though I had been only a few months in the country, to go up for the Lower Standard examination in Hindustani. It struck me that in such a big town there would be a goodly crowd of candidates, and that I might scrape through. But when I reached the examination-hall I found only one small chair and one small table in the middle of an immense room; and four examiners rapidly exposed my ignorance. I had been told that if I should pass the test, a peon bearing a white envelope would approach in leisurely fashion *salām*-ing profusely, with one hand ready for a rupee. When the time came a man dashed up, thrust a blue envelope upon me and ran like a hare. I learned that I had passed in the books and the exercise; but that when talking the language my pronunciation was "so extraordinary as to be quite unintelligible". I had, no doubt, been talking "Tommy's" Hindustani; but "Tommy" can always make himself understood.

Shortly before Christmas we set forth for Cawnpore, our new station. For several weeks we marched along the Grand Trunk Road witnessing daily such scenes and people as have been immortalised in *Kim*.

Our start was always made in the dusk before dawn in order that we might reach our next camping-ground before the heat of the day; so in the afternoon there was leisure for a ride after pig, or we would send for a man from one of the villages who could call up jackals. I had bought two 'long dogs' like heavily built greyhounds off one of the Waler boats; and we would keep them concealed, while the villager with wonderful mimicry would commence his howling. Then, one by one, the "jack" would come slinking out of the crops. We improvised one hasty tiger-shoot; but only came near to shooting our Indian doctor, who suddenly poked his brown face crowned with a huge yellow sola topee round the corner of a rock.

The next three years I spent in Cawnpore.

Since the Mutiny, there must ever hover round Cawnpore bitter memories; and to some extent they have helped me to understand the mentality of General Dyer of Amritsar notoriety and the evidence about that event which was given before my Martial Law tribunal during the Punjab troubles of 1919. I shall have much to say about General Dyer and Amritsar farther on.

In a garden, on the site of the old well, there is now the Memorial Well with the beautiful angel of the Italian sculptor, Carlo Marochetti. But in my possession are a photograph and a pen-and-ink sketch—probably unique—taken by my father-in-law, General Mayne, and a brother officer soon after the massacre. They are reproduced in this book. In the foreground is the old well covered over with the broken branches of trees; and behind it the line of low-roofed huts in which the butchery was committed—the infamous Nana Sahib's Slaughter-House. On the sketch it is noted how all along the path leading to the well down which the women and

children were thrown were signs of "blood and hair".

On June the 26th, 1857, the Cawnpore garrison surrendered; and the treacherous massacre commenced when under a safe-conduct they had embarked from what is now known as the Massacre Ghāt upon the Ganges. The butchery of the women and children took place on the approach of Havelock's force.

Before me lie old newspaper cuttings of those times, which I have not seen commented upon elsewhere. One of them contains a graphic description by an Indian—one of our spies—of how the Nana's guns opened on the boats, on one of which had been placed the wounded General Wheeler. He describes how the boat stuck on a sand-bank but floated off during the night; and how the Nana sent some of his men in a large boat to bring the fugitives back. Out of that boat came 60 men, 25 women and 4 children.

The Nana gave orders that the men should be shot; but the mutinous troops refused to shoot General Wheeler, saying that he had "made the name of their regiment great and that his son was their quartermaster". The women were separated from their husbands; but went back and sat with them until they were torn away.

Among the captives was a clergyman who was granted permission to read prayers, "his bonds being loosened to enable him to take a small book from his pocket. The *Sahib-lōg* shook hands all round; and then the sepoys fired". The women and children, to the number of 122, were taken to a "yellow house, formerly a hospital", and then to the huts where they were murdered before being thrown down the well.

The recorder of this narrative tells how he visited the Slaughter-House and saw there the blood-stained

dresses of women, and children's frocks. Leaves of the Bible and of a book entitled "*Preparation for Death*" were strewn all over the place, along with bonnets and locks of hair and broken daguerreotype cases. A pathetic relic was a scrap of hair tied with a ribbon in a piece of paper inscribed—"Ned's hair, with love".

One of my cuttings is an account given by my cousin, Lady Murray, of her escape from Gwalior on June the 14th. The party reached Agra; and a month later she watched from the fort the mutineers burning the cantonment and civil lines. The refugees' quarters in the fort were in a great square set round with arches, two arches being allotted to each married couple. What she regretted most was the loss of her "daguerreotypes and letters" and the picture of her baby, who had died the night before the flight from Gwalior. She relates how the party were cheered by the news of the arrival of a "China force at Calcutta", which might reach them in two months!

A cutting of September the 12th, 1857, contains the story of an escape from Nowgong where the mutiny broke out on June the 10th. The writer tells how he and his companions had 40 women and children to safeguard; the only transport being "an old camel-carriage and two buggies". The camel-carriage upset, and one of the buggies collapsed when a "fat sergeant-major" got into it.

"My part that day was terrible" (says the narrator). "I had to lug along two fat old women, while I carried three children on my horse; and this while lame from the kick of a horse and with only a strip of cloth on one foot." Later on he came across a golosh, which was "very useful".

And all this happened in the middle of an Indian "hot weather!" Some of the party died from sun-stroke, and there were terrible sufferings from thirst.

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At one point the villagers set upon them with bamboo-staves—doubtless, with ‘*lāthis*’, those formidable staves of male bamboo studded at one end with knobs of brass or iron. These were the weapons which, during the Punjab troubles in 1919, a sapient Member of Parliament described as “walking-sticks”.

In the course of this narrative we read how a doctor’s wife was forced to leave behind her dead husband; and after being stripped and plundered, walked barefoot for three miles over burning roads, but managed to “save her wedding-ring in her hair”. Another woman travelled 40 miles in one day on an almost bare-backed horse to which its rider had been tied. A child of two years of age survived these experiences, though for two whole days its head was bare to the sun.

There is still to be seen an old abandoned cemetery, filled with crumbling ochre-coloured plaster mausoleums; hideous to behold, but which were, I suppose, in vogue in those days. Many of them bear quaint inscriptions: there is one to the memory of “Lieutenant-Fireworker J—— S——. A most amiable young man.” But those were times when all ladies were spoken of as ‘amiable females’. Lieutenant-Fireworker was an old Gunner rank.

I turn to more pleasant topics.

Cawnpore for us subalterns was a cheerful station. There was polo; pig-sticking within easy reach; and boating upon the river.

From the Naini Tal boat-club we acquired an old sliding-seat four-oar; and in her I had an experience which I shall not forget.

The Ganges was in flood from the monsoon rains; and we pushed off from the Massacre Ghāt clad in rowing-shorts. Our flimsy craft rocked a good deal; and we recollect that the Ganges is a happy hunting-ground for crocodile. We had reached midstream

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when 'stroke' uttered a yell: a snake had poked its head up through a hole in the bottom boards! The pace at which we returned to the bank would have beaten any crew on any river. The intruder turned out to be a large and harmless grass-snake; but it might quite easily have been a cobra!

Another small yarn connected with the Ganges occurs to me.

It was famine time, and in a baking tent pitched upon the bank lived the Famine Relief officer superintending a horde of relief-workers who were making an embankment. All day he stared drearily over a scorched expanse of country; and at night, having doped them all with quinine to ward off fever, had his solitary supper and a smoke and retired to get what rest he might until there dawned another day.

On the cool heights of Simla, in a comfortable office, sat a young gentleman of the Civil Secretariat inditing an epistle to the Famine officer directing him "to observe and report on the habits of the Gangetic dolphin, with a view to its capture and use as food."

In due course the epistle reached its destination, and the Famine officer having declaimed to the heedless river what he thought about the writer drew to himself a sheet of foolscap.

"Sir," he wrote, "I have the honour to report that the Gangetic dolphin goes base over apex. This is the only habit I have noted up to date."

I have worded the letter rather more politely than he did!

Forty years ago there were more peppery old Anglo-Indians about than there are nowadays. More frequent visits to England have helped to keep tempers sweet. About them it used to be said that their breakfasts consisted of "rubbing chillies on their

tongues". Concerning one of them the story went that his breakfast each morning was a poached egg; his servant placed it before him; he looked at it for a moment and then sent it away. He had had his breakfast.

Such a one was Colonel Prinsep, who commanded Cawnpore station. He was a very handsome man, and in his youth had been the model for the young Christ in Holman Hunt's picture—"Christ and the Doctors". I was only once privileged to breakfast in his company; and after listening to my chatter for a couple of minutes he sternly admonished me: "I never speak at breakfast. I only point at things."

But our prize old-time warrior was General Aeneas Perkins, who commanded at Lucknow. The best story about him concerns his encounter with an Indian crow. The General's favourite charger had died; and the Veterinary Hospital had diagnosed some stomach complaint. The General disagreed; and ordered that a portion of the stomach should be cut out and kept for his inspection. Accompanied by his Staff he rode up to the hospital, where part of the unfortunate animal's intestines had been laid out upon a low mud wall. Adjusting his glasses, the General bent to examine them, when from right under his nose a crow removed them into the upper branches of a tree. There ensued the unseemly spectacle of a bevy of Staff officers endeavouring to suppress their mirth, while at the foot of the tree there danced a temporarily demented General shaking his fist at the crow and shouting: "You something something something, *you bring that back!*"

Incidentally, I understand that these explosive martinetis did not belong solely to the Army; for a naval friend of mine has told me of an old sea-captain under whom he served at about the same time. Being

a very young officer, encountering his captain early one day, he wished him a respectful "Good-morning, sir!" For a moment the old man glared at him; and then barked almost in one breath: "Good-morning good-morning good-morning! And now, young feller, let that Good Morning last you for the rest of the trip!"

We subalterns shared old-fashioned tumbledown bungalows which belonged to native owners. Most of them had ceiling-cloths, stretches of white-washed canvas like that referred to in Kipling's story "*The Return of Imray*". One could, if one wished, lie on one's bed and shoot with an air-gun through the ceiling at creatures which crept about on the farther side of the cloth. When the Rains came, the roofs leaked like sieves; and thus originated a practical joke frequently played on a newcomer. After he was asleep, a lump of ice would be placed just over his head on the top of his mosquito curtains. The drip would awake him; and he would spend much of the night shifting his bed round the room endeavouring to dodge imaginary holes in the roof.

In our part of the station one of the best bungalows was inhabited, not unnaturally, by the Station Staff Officer; but he, too, became acquainted with sorrow. Once, when departing on six months' leave, he gave strict orders to the native owner that the bungalow should be kept empty for his return. He returned; and found it empty, but impregnated with a most unpleasant aroma. It was some time before he discovered that the owner, being unwilling to forgo all rent for a period of six months, had leased the largest room, the drawing-room, during his absence to a man who kept goats.

My years at Cawnpore were the only years in which I won money on a race-course. My cousin,

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Frank Shakespear, of the 4th Bengal Cavalry, was the best steeplechase rider in India; and whenever he rode a pony named "Lal Khan", one could bet on a cert. The Durham Light Infantry were then sweeping the board at all polo tournaments; and I have grateful recollections of the man who for ten years captained their team—now Lieutenant-General Sir Beauvoir De Lisle. I was told that De Lisle had little use for the youngster who thought he knew all about ponies; but that if I told him that I knew very little, and was keen, and could not pay much, I should not regret it. I followed this advice; and "Dodger" was the best pony I ever owned.

The *cacoethes scribendi* suddenly attacked us; and Eardley Wilmot of my regiment and I conceived the idea of publishing a periodical, which we entitled "*The Foghorn*". Several of the most amusing amateur writers in India contributed to its columns; and we had quite a large number of subscribers, some of whom occasionally paid. We joint-editors wrote under the *nom de plume* of 'The Early-Wormlet' and 'The Subaltern'. The periodical attained considerable notoriety; and long after it had ceased publication some Ceylon planters sent us a three-years' subscription. Incidentally, we did good work by rescuing from the columns of a forgotten newspaper Kipling's "Campaigning Phrase-Book" (for the use of Tommy Atkins), which we reprinted.

The 'Early-Wormlet' was a person of infinite jest and variety; and an example of his impromptu wit occurs to me. During a Lucknow Race Week a number of us were having an early lunch at the Commissioner's house before the afternoon's racing. There came a rattle of wheels, and a young officer drove up to pay his call: the ridiculous hours for calling in India being from twelve till two. His conveyance was the

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light two-wheeled trap known all over India as a 'tum-tum'.

Mrs. Commissioner kindly gave him five minutes of her time; and returning to us remarked: "Quite a nice young fellow; but he actually had a syce on the back-seat holding an umbrella over him! I don't approve of young officers driving about with umbrellas on their tum-tums". Quick as thought came the comment of 'The Wormlet': "Don't be angry with him, lady! Perhaps it was a birthmark."

Occasionally we would start an acrimonious correspondence in some newspaper, and half India seemed to join gleefully in! One such series of letter concerned a complaint of mine about the price charged for a tonga up the hill to Murree; and the Parsi tonga owner and his lawyer threatened to sue me. The 'Wormlet' took the side of the Parsi, and wrote describing me as an unprincipled blackguard. I challenged him to a duel; and he, having the choice of weapons, chose squirts. The late Colonel Hobday, who afterwards designed for me the menu-card for the supper-room of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales at the Punjab Ball, did a clever pen-and-ink sketch of the duel.

During one 'hot weather' I officiated for three months as A.D.C. to my cousin, General Sir Robert Low, in Lucknow. Nice-looking girls gave me the honorary rank of 'Captain', I learned to help ladies on with their cloaks, and I thought myself rather a fine fellow. I also met several interesting people.

One of them was the late General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, who was D.A.A.G. at Lucknow. He and Captain 'Kitty' Apthorp of the Royal Irish were the two most trusted patrons of racing in India. Some years later, when he was on his way to command at Quetta, I travelled back to India with the General and the charming lady whom he had recently married.

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It was monsoon-time, and they were both wretched sailors; so I appointed myself A.D.C. and fed them with apples. He was very proud of his wife's linguistic attainments, and her artistic genius has recently been displayed in her design for our present Queen's Coronation robes.

During my time in Lucknow we had a few days' visit from the C.-in-C., the late Field-Marshal Sir George White, who had won the V.C. in the second Afghan War and was destined later on to be the defender of Ladysmith. My duties included exercising a horse for kind Lady White and guarding her voluminous sleeves from flopping into her soup.

Sir George was rather a grim-visaged personage; but quite involuntarily I supplied him with a jest which caused him to smile at intervals during the remainder of his visit. On a Sunday morning, General Low was escorting Lady White on a tour round some of the sights; so I was detailed to accompany the Chief to the English church.

No sooner had I taken my seat in the pew than there came the ominous sound of rending, and I realised that the worst had happened! The weather being hot, I was wearing white drill uniform, the breeches of which were rather tight; and the rotten *bazar* thread had given way causing the back seam to open literally from stem to stern! There was nothing I could do beyond arranging my sword-slings to the best advantage over the yawning gap and make a crab-like exit from the sacred edifice.

Whilst in Lucknow I spent some of my time studying the old ruined Residency, where Sir Henry Lawrence had died of his wounds during the great Siege. What interested me much were the *tah-khanas*, the underground apartments used in the hot weather; for a great-aunt had often told me of the banquets

given therein to Indian potentates many years before the Mutiny by Sir John Low, who from 1831 to 1843 had been the Resident.

When the weather became really sultry, I accompanied my General to his summer headquarters at Naini Tal. There was much junketing there; the most princely of entertainers being Mr. Rivett-Carnac, the Opium Agent, a member of the famous Anglo-Indian family to which Kipling has referred in *The Tomb of His Ancestors*. He had one very harmless foible: the habit of constantly mentioning the various distinguished people whom he had known. This unfortunately made him the special butt of a practical joker, a Captain in an Irish regiment whom none of us liked.

One day, seeing the Opium Agent approaching the cricket pavilion, his tormentor bawled at the top of his voice:

“Good-morning, Rivett-Carnac. How’s the Duke?”

His victim smiled pleasantly. “Er—which Duke?” he inquired politely.

“Oh, *I* don’t know!” came the answer. “*Any* bloody Duke!”

On another occasion the jester started a conversation about some mythical friend of his who had once held a commission in ‘The Houlihans’. It sounded like the name of some Prussian regiment; and the listener asked for information.

“‘The Houlihans’? I’ve never heard of them. Who are they?”

“What? You don’t mean to say you don’t know? Why, they’re the people who lead the blind monkeys out every morning to make water.”

We were all pleased when two of his victims had their revenge on the jester. They were setting off to pay calls, and offered to drop some of his cards in the

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'Not-at-Home' boxes which they hoped to find hanging on trees and the gateposts of bungalows. He handed them a packet, and they carefully left them at all the Eurasian habitations they could discover. For the rest of the season, much to his surprise and annoyance, the joker found all the dusky Miss De Souzas and Miss De Rozarios smirking ingratiatingly at him, while their duskier mothers sent him on violently scented notepaper invitations to supper.

## CHAPTER III

IN March of 1895 I had the good fortune to become Orderly Officer to Lieutenant-General Sir Robert Low, commanding the Chitral Relief Expedition.

Chitral was an Independent State with a capital of the same name, ruled over by a Mehtar. Shut in by spurs of the Hindu Kush mountains it lies across the frontier 186 miles from Peshawar; and was at the time reached by roads which were mere tracks. It was under the supervision of the British Agent at Gilgit, Surgeon-Major (afterwards Sir George) Robertson.

The old Mehtar, a sturdy supporter of the 'quiverful' theory, died leaving seventeen sons; and between two of them a struggle for the vacant throne immediately commenced. Following good old frontier tradition the younger of the two invited the elder to a New Year's Day hawking-party, and shot him dead.

Lieutenant Gurdon (who had been at my old school, Haileybury) was Political Officer in Chitral with a very small escort; and whilst he was taking orders as to who was to be the new ruler, the murderer applied for assistance to his relative, a marauding chieftain, by name Umra Khan of Jandol.

At the end of January Dr. Robertson reached Chitral with some 400 men, arrested the murderer and installed another of the brothers as the new Mehtar. Insurgent Chitralis under one Sher Afzal (who belonged to the Chitral royal line, but was an exile in Afghan territory, a friend of the Amir and an adherent of Umra Khan) at the beginning of March commenced to besiege the fort.

All communication with the outside world was cut off; and the garrison of 543 persons was besieged for 46 days; the actual relieving force being Colonel Kelly's column from Gilgit consisting of some 400 men of the 32nd Pioneer regiment. It was a splendid achievement: the covering of 220 miles in 29 days over passes 13,000 feet high, deep in snow, and with many of his men suffering from frost-bite and snow-blindness.

General Low's force: three Brigades under Generals Kinloch, Waterfield (popularly known as the '*Lāl Bālu*', the Red Bear, on account of the colour of his beard) and Gatacre assembled at Nowshera on March the 31st; but terrible weather, adding to the difficulties of transport, delayed for a day or two our advance.

This enforced halt afforded us youngsters an opportunity for a festive dinner at the Guides' Mess in Hoti Mardan; and after Mess we attended to Freddy Roberts' hair with horse-clippers. Freddy, only son of the great 'Bobs Bahādur', had been at Sandhurst with me, where he had easily carried off the riding-prize. He was destined, five years later, to win a posthumous V.C. for his gallant attempt to save the guns at Colenso; but when he crossed the frontier on the way to Chitral he looked like a cheery young Buddhist begging-friar who had abandoned his robes for khaki.

Three days later came the capture of the Malakand Pass; and my first experience of frontier warfare. From below the Malakand looked an impregnable position, its precipitous slopes towering to nearly three thousand feet, held by twelve thousand hardy tribesmen concealed behind their *sangars* (stone parapets) above which fluttered flags and banners emblazoned with the sacred '*panja*': the print of five fingers of Mahomed the Prophet. These *sangars* had

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been most skilfully disposed, each one being covered by fire from the one above it.

Four British and three Indian regiments, supported by Mountain Batteries and Maxims, took part in the capture of the Pass; and the action lasted five and a half hours. A great shout went up, when after severe hand-to-hand fighting the crest was reached. Our loss was seventy killed and wounded; while 1500 killed and wounded was the estimated loss of the enemy.

I had often heard of but had never till then witnessed the reckless valour of the tribesman warrior. I shall not readily forget it. One saw a man waving a red and white flag, yelling, springing from rock to rock, charging downhill single-handed at a British regiment until, hit over and over again, he would fall headlong, dead, close up to the advancing line. Again, there was the drummer who, riddled with bullets, went on drumming till he died. Mr. Gandhi not very long ago announced that, given a free hand, he would "conquer the Pathan with Love." Had he ever seen a frontier warrior leaping down a hillside flourishing a curved sword, he would have realised how inadequate a weapon Love can be!

I must not omit to mention the imperturbable gentleman who the following day, in spite of a steady fire directed at him, sat perched on a rock and sniped at intervals into our camp. He was evidently the champion shot of the village, for beside him perched an attendant sheltering him from the rays of the sun with the remnants of a tattered umbrella.

After the battle was over a stroke of luck befell us. This was a discovery, some way up the mountain-side, of the remains of an old Buddhist road leading downwards to the Swat valley. Tackled by the 'Suffering Miners' (for so the Bengal Sappers and

Miners were known to the Force), it was quickly made practicable. Then the long line of men, urging on the laden camels and donkeys, went clambering up to and along it, glancing aside at the *sangar* where lay (until there was time to bury him) the body of 'Ginger'. 'Ginger', with his flaming red hair and beard, had been conspicuous in the fighting, a gigantic warrior who had done much damage until a thrust from a British bayonet had put an end to his activities. According to an eye-witness, the thrust had been delivered along with a characteristic specimen of Atkins' peculiar humour: "*Ginger, you go 'ome! Yer face worries me!*"

Four days later came the action at the Swat river, when the brunt of the fighting was borne by the cavalry, the 11th Bengal Lancers and the Guides. It was on the evening of that day that I first met that famous gentleman-rider, Major 'Roddy' Owen.

How he had contrived to join us was a mystery. As far as we could make out, he had arrived without leave and as an unofficial war correspondent; but 'Roddy' was ever a law unto himself! He had been across the river with the cavalry; and when I first saw him he was smoking the bowl of a pipe, having lost the stem. He was seated on a shaggy white pony which he had captured from a tribesman and christened 'Father O'Flynn' after the horse on which he had won the Grand National. Whenever letters from England reached us, 'Roddy's' mail was a sight to see. About half the population of the British Isles, from duchesses down to stable-boys, appeared to write to him; but I do not think that 'Roddy' ever answered any of their letters.

When Headquarters moved to the camp on the farther bank, I was privileged to watch one of the funniest scenes that I have ever beheld. This was the

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passage of the Swat river by our old Headquarters cook, Khuda Baksh (the 'Gift of God'). He made the crossing spraddled between two Indian troopers, who swam their horses over upholding him by either arm. From time to time the grinning troopers soused him beneath the flood; and after a brief interval the head of our *chef* would reappear, turbanless and spouting like a whale, calling frantically upon the sacred name of Allah the Merciful, and promising rich rewards to his escort, should the opposite side be reached in safety. But once more on solid ground, the 'Gift of God' forgot everything except his recent sousings; and the mildest of the maledictions shrieked at his late tormentors was the earnestly expressed hope that: 'Dogs might defile their tombs'.

At the Panjkora river, which we reached a few days later, there occurred an event which cast a temporary gloom over the whole force.

The Guides Infantry had been sent across one evening over a frail raft bridge with orders to punish certain villages from which firing at our troops had taken place. Supports were to have been sent them the next morning; but as often happens in those mountainous tracts, the river during the night became swollen to a raging flood, and heavy logs of wood came whirling down and carried away the bridge. Straightway it became impossible to move more troops across.

Unaware of this the Guides had started on their mission up the slopes; and all that could be done to aid them was by fire from the Mountain Batteries and Maxims directed across the river.

Seizing their opportunity, great numbers of the enemy came pouring down the slopes; and with the steadiness of a regiment on parade the Guides were forced to retire. They reached their post by dusk; but

before they reached it, Colonel Fred Battye had fallen, dying, as he would have wished to die, at the head of his regiment. Those of us who were watching will never forget the charge of the Afridi company of the Guides to recover their Colonel's body.

He was the youngest of three brothers, all of whom fell in action with the Guides; and about them a writer in *The Saturday Review* wrote this: "So long as Great Britain has such men—and there are thousands of them—foreigners may prate in vain of the decadence of our race." Many years afterwards the Great War was to prove the truth of this saying: but its sentiment may sound abhorrent in the ears of our present-day pacifists.

It was during our brief halt at the Panjkora that a very brave feat was performed by Major Aylmer (afterwards, General Sir Fenton Aylmer), who a few years previously had won his V.C. at the storming of Nilt fort in the Hunza campaign.

It fell to his lot as a Sapper to construct of telegraph wire and beams from dismantled houses a suspension bridge, by means of which we might cross the river; and in forty-eight hours it was ready. But before the superstructure had been fashioned there came a catastrophe. Higher up the river a raft, on which were two British soldiers and two Indians, was suddenly swept away by the flood. General Gatacre, who from the bank had seen this happen, aware that the river made several bends before reaching the bridge-site, sprang promptly on to his pony and raced to where Aylmer and his men were working. Aylmer, equally prompt, had himself pulled out to the centre of the stream in a sling-cradle; and, as the raft rushed beneath him, managed to grab and drag to safety its sole remaining occupant, one of the British soldiers.

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Our halt at the Panjkora was memorable for another incident: the safe arrival in camp of Lieutenants Fowler and Edwardes, who for a month had been held as prisoners by Umra Khan.

These two officers had been on their way to Chitral with engineering stores and a small escort. Unaware that the siege of Chitral had begun, they had been treacherously captured while watching a native polo match by one of Sher Afzal's leaders. However, the hardships which they had undergone had not damped their spirits; and Edwardes certainly had reason for rejoicing, for he was greeted with the news that his brother had won the third prize in the Calcutta Derby Sweep! The third horse was '*Kirkconnel*'; and I think that half the ticket had been bought by that well-known Anglo-Indian sportsman, "Bill" (Lord William) Beresford. So the brother's share amounted to something like twenty thousand rupees. Hardships and captivity were alike forgotten; and Edwardes danced outside my tent in the moonlight, singing joyously a music-hall ditty of those days:

"Oh, have you used *Vinolia-a-a*,  
That plastic and emollient cream?"

There is no doubt that Fowler and Edwardes owed their freedom to the strength and diplomacy of our Chief Political Officer, Major (afterwards Sir Harold) Deane, a 'frontier warden' of the type which the Pathan both fears and loves. A man with a strong, pleasant face and eyes that could look right through you. It was about him that Lord Curzon once remarked: "Give me the man with the bushy eyebrows!" In the land of the shades he must be watching with pleasure the career of his son-in-law, Sir Francis Humphrys who, before he went as our representative

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to Baghdad, in co-operation with Air Commodore Sir Geoffrey Salmond in 1929 evacuated the European population of Kabul into India by air.

I digress for a moment to make mention of one or two other big men of the frontier whom I have known and admired. There was Roos-Keppel, who would sit up all night speaking words of wisdom to his friends, Multan and Chikai, those truculent border free-booters. Though Lord Morley got the idea that "Roos" was "rather a fire-eater", Chikai would do for him what he would do for no other man.

There was Sir John Maffey, afterwards Governor-General of the Sudan and permanent Secretary for the Colonies, who, when Chief Commissioner of the Frontier Province, took the risk of sending the gallant Mrs. Starr (now Mrs. Underhill) across the frontier into tribal territory to the rescue of kidnapped Mollie Ellis. There have been others, too, whose names are worthy to rank with those of Nicolson and Edwardes and the Lawrences, those splendid Indian administrators of old.

To the men whose work is on the Frontier I raise my hat. This is what Lord Minto wrote to Lord Morley in 1908:

"Every frontier officer accepts the risk of *ghāzi* (fanatical assassination), but what C—— and his comrades have to face from day to day is the constant chance of planned assassination. I often think that people at home cannot realise the strain which such an existence means: to know that you can't leave your house for a few yards in safety to play lawn tennis; that you are never safe anywhere; to have your servant and secretary brutally murdered, and to know that it is only constant care and courage which can save you and your brother officers from a similar fate, is a hard trial to undergo for long."

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On April the 17th was fought the decisive action of the campaign; and Umra Khan, driven from his stronghold of Munda, fled into exile taking with him what booty he could carry. General Gatacre, with a small but mobile force, went hastening to the relief of the beleaguered garrison. The Lowarai Pass, when he crossed it, was for a distance of six miles under deep snow; and it was no fault of his that Colonel Kelly's column from Gilgit reached Chitral before him.

Including the Malakand there were five mountain passes to cross; and we all had our share of the snow-fields. Down some of them the cheery little Gurkhas, screaming with laughter, tobogganed on boards; but the quaintest sight was the spectacle of laden mules sliding solemnly down on their haunches, shaking themselves free of their loads and then waiting for some one to come and dig them out.

So, riding or tramping day by day over rocky roads, through forests of pine, past villages and orchards full of trees covered with ripe mulberries (a curse on Beelzebub, king of the flies which tormented us!) we of Headquarters reached Chitral in the middle of May. Over the world's craziest bridge, a contrivance of narrow sagging planks with no hand-rail, we crossed the river to the fort.

Chitral fort was eighty yards square, with walls twenty-five feet high and eight feet thick; built of rude masonry and beams. At each corner of it stood a tower; while a fifth tower, fifty yards distant on the margin of the river, guarded the waterway. High trees surrounding the fort had afforded cover for the enemy; and every drop of water for the garrison had to be drawn from the river. The defence of the fort against incessant attacks had been a masterpiece of pluck and endurance.

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On General Low's arrival there was a big parade; and we heard the full story of the stout-hearted defenders, how for many days they had lived on horse-flesh, and how the enemy had once managed to set fire to the gun-tower. We heard again the story of the bravery of Surgeon-Captain Whitchurch, who was awarded the V.C. for his exploit. From a sortie before the actual siege began, in darkness and under unceasing rifle fire, he had carried back to the fort poor Baird mortally wounded. At the very foot of the gun-tower we saw the enemy's mine, blown up after a sally by Lieutenant Harley and his Sikhs along with men of the Kashmir Rifles.

On the day when the siege commenced, Captain Colin Campbell of the Central India Horse was in command of the troops of the garrison. In the sortie before the siege he was badly wounded; and the active command devolved on Captain Townsend of the same regiment. Several years later Colin Campbell married one of the Misses Leiter and became Lord Curzon's brother-in-law.

In Townsend's adventurous career Chitral was merely an episode. In earlier days he had taken part in the relief of Khartoum; and by Christmas of 1915 (being by that time General Sir Charles Townsend) he found himself beleagured in Kut, the siege of which place lasted for one hundred and forty-three days before the garrison was obliged to surrender to the Turks. After his two sieges Townsend must have known as much about the taste of horse-flesh as any Frenchman or Belgian of the lower classes!

To his soldierly qualities Townsend added that of being an admirable comic singer; and among the music-hall fraternity he had an extensive acquaintance. At the Chitral supper which he gave after his return on leave to England there were two principal guests.

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One of them was George Nathaniel Curzon, then under-secretary for Foreign Affairs; and the other was Arthur Roberts, the comedian.

It is interesting to note, in connection with the battles and siege of Kut during the Great War, the well-known names of other commanders who played their parts in the Chitral affair; the names of Generals Sir Fenton Aylmer, Sir George Younghusband and Sir John Nixon.

Of Aylmer mention has already been made. Sir George (now Keeper of the Jewels at the Tower) was to us rather careless subalterns an example of how a soldier with much campaigning to his credit could, even on active service, always be smartly turned out. His brother was also with us for a time; Sir Francis Younghusband of the Political Department, explorer and writer, who on the Chitral Expedition was special correspondent for *The Times*.

“Johnnie” Nixon belonged to the Intelligence Department; and on the day when he became a Major he threatened to have some of us youngsters scalped for lining up at intervals in front of his tent and respectfully saluting him. However, he returned good for evil by appointing several of us war correspondents. All the Indian newspapers were badgering him for telegrams and news-letters; and to my substantial profit I took over the job for the *Bombay Gazette* and *Indian Daily News*.

By virtue of my exalted position of Orderly Officer to the G.O.C. I came in contact with many men whose names are household words.

One of them was that splendid veteran of Sappers, General Sir Bindon Blood, now in his 95th year, and still going strong in spite of his long record of service on the Indian frontier, in Egypt and South Africa. He was Chief of Staff to General Sir Robert Low; and he

it was who had the framing of "mentions in dispatches", whereby I learned to my surprise that I had been "active, and of great assistance." For Sir Robert's A.D.C. he coined the never-to-be-forgotten phrase: "impervious to fatigue."

During the campaign General Sir Ian Hamilton paid us a visit; and so did Colonel "Algy" Durand. The latter, who at the time was Military Secretary to the Viceroy, had been commissioned by Lord Elgin to "convey his congratulations" to the new Mehtar. This was a perfectly natural proceeding; but some wag started the idea that Durand's party had been sent across the frontier just in time to qualify for the new India General Service Medal; and they made their tour under the *soubriquet* of an imaginary Parsi firm entitled 'Chitralji Medalji'.

General Gatacre was a man of dynamic energy; and Thomas Atkins' name for him—'Back-Acher'—was no misnomer. He would pass us, speeding up the line with no more impedimenta than a cake of soap and a tooth-brush, propping himself off his saddle because of a boil, while after him clattered his Orderly Officer, Brooke of the 7th Hussars, equally energetic and knocking to pieces the hooves of valuable polo ponies on the terrible stony roads. The General, when there was nothing else to do, would sometimes summon me to take immense walks; and I learned from him much that was valuable, including the use of clover, crocus-leaves and the tops of bracken as spinach—a pleasant change from the everlasting Erbswurst which at times was all we had by way of vegetables. The General's chief abhorrence was a slacker; and he used to tell with gusto the story of a fat clerk from the Simla offices who had been attached to him for clerical work. Mr. P—— had for many years sat comfortably upon an office stool.

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The General promptly had him mounted upon the roughest available mule, from which Mr. P—— would roll on reaching the next camp and lie flat on his stomach exhausted and exclaiming: "I'm fair fed up with this 'ere Chitral!" One gathers that General Gatacre's unquenchable energy had something to do with his reverse at Stormberg during the Boer War: he was incapable of understanding that few men had his power of resisting fatigue.

Another man of whom I saw much was the late Field-Marshal Sir William Robertson. When the Chitral campaign started he was a Lieutenant and our Field Intelligence Officer. He had the hard-headed common sense and the pawky humour of a man risen from 'the ranks'; and we used often to ride or tramp together between camps. I did not happen to be with him on the day when, out with a reconnoitring party, one of his escort suddenly shot him in the hand and slashed him across the forehead with a sword. His assailant was subsequently captured by the Khan of Dir (a minor chieftain) and was shot; but General Low did not accept the Khan's suggestion that the throats of all the male relations of the would-be murderer should be cut, and that his female relations should be "shared out among deserving men!"

After the fighting and the visit to Chitral were over, there followed for most of us some tedious months of waiting; while the bigwigs of Simla and elsewhere were busied with questions of future policy. It was September before I found myself back in Cawnpore with my regiment.

Among my notes I find a few other items of interest; one of which concerns the aforesaid Khan of Dir whom Umra Khan had deprived of his territory. Very wisely, he had thrown in his lot with us; con-

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solidating his position by the capture of the troublesome Sher Afzal.

The Khan was an earnest proselytizer; and one evening I rode into camp to be bidden by my chuckling comrades to look at my 'bearer'. My former 'bearer' had been left behind in Cawnpore, a promise of double pay having failed to attract him to active service. At the last moment I had been obliged to engage as a body-servant a Hindu scallywag of low degree. To my astonishment, I perceived the scallywag setting forth my india-rubber tub, 'clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful'—in other words, wearing flowing garments of snow-white cotton. The reason for this soon became apparent: during my temporary absence the Khan of Dir had turned my scallywag into a Mohammedan!

Another note concerns our wrath with the correspondent of an English newspaper, who wrote inveighing against the "inhuman practice" of hanging a murderer in a pig's skin. Often on the line of march one of the enemy would creep into camp and cut the throat of some miserable camp-follower, who was lying asleep. The only method of stopping this was by letting it be known that the murderer, if caught, would be hanged in a pig's skin by a man of the lowest caste, his corpse thereafter being burnt. It was wicked, the correspondent argued, to "take away a Mohammedan's hope of Paradise"; but to us it seemed even more terrible not to attempt to safeguard by any means in our power the humble camp-followers' lives.

Among his many distinctions received both before and after the Chitral Expedition, General Low could number one unusual one: an honourable mention in that once famous comic periodical—*Ally Sloper's Half-Holiday*. I have a print purporting to show him

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receiving a sword of honour from 'Colonel Ally Sloper, of the Shoe Lane Volunteers'. But what amused him as much was an application to join the Relief Force sent him by an Indian. As regards his qualifications the applicant stated that he had passed through Bareilly College and was a gymnast; stating further that he was anxious "either to join the Commissariat or become a spy".

In an earlier portion of this chapter I mentioned the action at the crossing of the Swat river. The name 'Swat' derives, I understand, from the Greek name 'Soastes' of the time of Alexander the Great. Besides being the name of a river, Swat is also the name of a tract of country, a fertile valley some 70 miles in extent. It is largely covered by rice-fields, and is inhabited by Swati Pathans who dwell in villages the houses of which are built of mud and half-baked bricks, each village of any size having its watch-tower.

A good many years ago there flourished in the valley a religious preceptor of renown known as the Akhund of Swat. Outside of India, probably, no one had ever heard of him until one day, in 1876, there appeared in the London papers this curt announcement:

*"The Akhund of Swat is dead."*

This announcement stirred to a fine poetic frenzy a Mr. George T. Lanigan, an American versifier, who forthwith sat himself down and indited a threnody in memory of the departed, whom he had never seen and of whom he had never before heard. But the name tickled his fancy.

Since so few of my friends appear to have come across Mr. George T. Lanigan's masterpiece of poesy, I may be pardoned for reproducing it:

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*A Threnody*

What, what, what,  
What's the news from Swat?  
Sad news,  
Bad news,  
Comes by the cable led  
Through the Indian Ocean's bed,  
Through the Persian Gulf, the Red  
Sea and the Med-  
iterranean—he's dead;  
The Ahkoond is dead!

For the Ahkoond I mourn,  
Who wouldn't?  
He strove to disregard the message stern,  
But he Ahkoodn't.  
Dead, dead, dead;  
(Sorrow Swats!)  
Swats wha hae wi' Ahkoond bled,  
Swats whom he hath often led  
Onward to a gory bed,  
Or to victory,  
As the case might be,  
(Sorrow Swats!)  
Tears shed,  
Shed tears like water,  
Your great Ahkoond is dead!  
That Swats the matter!

Mourn, City of Swat!  
Your great Ahkoond is not,  
But lain 'mid worms to rot,  
His mortal part alone, his soul was caught  
(Because he was a good Ahkoond)  
Up to the bosom of Mahound.

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Though earthly walls his frame surround  
(For ever hallowed be the ground!)  
And skeptics mock the lowly mound  
And say "He's now of no Ahkound!"

His soul is in the skies—  
The azure skies that bend above his loved  
Metropolis of Swat.  
He sees with larger, other eyes,  
Athwart all earthly mysteries—  
He knows what's Swat.

Let Swat bury the great Ahkoond  
With a noise of mourning and of lament-  
ation!  
Let Swat bury the great Ahkoond  
With the noise of the mourning of the  
Swattish nation!  
Fallen is at length  
Its tower of strength,  
Its sun is dimmed ere it had nooned;  
Dead lies the great Ahkoond,  
The great Ahkoond of Swat  
Is not!

## CHAPTER IV

AFTER my return to Cawnpore I was not much longer with my regiment; for a letter came, informing me that I had been appointed to the Punjab Commission. I was very sorry to be leaving so many good fellows; but the opportunity was too valuable to be missed.

I had known that something of the kind was in the air; because whilst I was still in the regions round Chitral, I had received a letter from Mr. Fanshawe, Chief Secretary to the Punjab Government. He had asked me to answer a number of questions, one of which was: "Are you in anything approaching to a matrimonial entanglement?"

"Pincher Sahib" (as the Aryan brother called him) was a Civilian of the old school: a pompous, bearded man, but with a human side to him. He sat all day in his office at Lahore surrounded by files dealing with important matters; his work being constantly interrupted by some Indian State official who had come to pay him a visit. Many of these visitors had really nothing to say; but thought it consonant with their dignity to call on the Chief Secretary. "Pincher" would receive them most politely, would discourse of this and that; and when his visitors had departed, would relieve his feelings by banging his fist on the table and growling in his beard: "They'll all burn in Hell! They'll all burn in Hell!"

The Punjab Commission was mainly staffed by members of that splendid body, the Indian Civil Service. But for some time past it had been the practice to enrol in it, when there chanced to be vacancies, men from the Indian Army nominated by the Viceroy or the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab. The idea

was to utilise us in administrative work, including the command of frontier levies. As a matter of fact, with the exception of the Chief Court and certain secretarial posts, all posts were open to us 'military-civilians'; and I would here pay a tribute to my comrades of the I.C.S. During all my years in the Punjab Commission never once had I reason to complain of jealousy or favouritism.

No doubt I had a higher opinion of that great corps than the witty Indian who objected to the name 'Indian Civil Service' on the ground that its members were not Indians, were not civil, and were not servants!

By way of compliment, no doubt, to General Sir Robert Low after his successful campaign, the Viceroy, Lord Elgin, nominated me; and I was directed to join at Jhelum as an Assistant-Commissioner—an 'Eshtunt Sahib', as the common folk elected to call us.

There came my last parade; my farewell to the grizzled old Native Officers; and after parade I most unwisely strolled across the parade-ground to say good-bye to the nilghai, the Gunners' pet. He was a fine specimen of the Indian antelope known as the 'blue bull'; and when I left for Chitral had been a charming little fellow who would come bowing and scraping to have his neck scratched. He had, of course, grown considerably; and when I was within a few yards of him he made a sudden charge and sent me flying. Vainly I mounted and chivied him with a sword: following the tactics of his tribe, he would lollop ahead and then suddenly jink. It takes three men to ride a nilghai; and I never even got a poke at him. But I was avenged; for a week later he knocked over an old woman in the *bazar*, and the Gunners ate him!

In Jhelum I embarked on a totally new existence.

I found myself a very junior magistrate, sitting in a Court endeavouring to decide petty cases of theft and assault. Since my knowledge of Punjabi at the time was extremely limited, I was usually constrained to follow the advice of my fat Hindu 'Reader' in arriving at a decision. I do not think that the parties to the cases much minded: they realised that the young Sahib was doing his best; and that after all there were appellate courts in which they might continue their squabbles. To the average Indian litigation is both meat and drink. Moreover, I learned later that my 'Reader' was considered a very honest person: though he would accept bribes from both sides, it was his custom to return a portion of them to the losers of a case.

My immediate superior was the Deputy Commissioner (in some parts of India called the Collector); and I discovered what it meant to be the Head of the District. To the common folk of the towns, to the peasantry of the villages, as well as to men of higher degree, he is *Mā Bāp*—Mother and Father—the all-powerful, the all-wise. He can recommend for honours, or for degradation. Is there a riot or a dacoity, he must deal with it through his police. Is there famine, it is for him to make arrangements for coping with it. At all hours of the day and the night he must be accessible to all and sundry. He must watch collections and remissions of revenue; he must see to the punishment of the malefactor and the protection of the innocent. Commissioners of Divisions, Governors of Provinces, His Excellency the Viceroy himself may flit like touring phantoms across the villagers' panorama: the 'Dipty Commissner Sahib' stands firmly planted in his district like some very approachable god. Small wonder that no story about him is too strange to be believed; like that

about the Sahib who during the Great War forbade the German Emperor to come sailing up the Jumna.

As long ago as 1879, Aberigh-Mackay, gifted writer in *Vanity Fair* of 'Twenty-One Days in India', sang the Collectors' praises; and in the Simon Commission's Report of 1930 we find this passage: "It is difficult to convey to an English reader how great is the prestige of the Collector of a District among the inhabitants whom he serves. To most of them he is the embodiment of Government." It stands to reason that in a vast country where a diversity of religions, customs and languages must for ever prohibit the formation of an 'Indian Nation', the neutral, impartial Englishman gifted with the 'personal touch' can and does wield great power for good. The mere fact that he is impartial, coupled with the knowledge that his English superiors will support him in everything except misbehaviour, slackness or folly, strengthens him to shoulder responsibility, a duty which the average Indian loathes. It will be a sad day for India when the last English Deputy Commissioner leaves the country.

Before long I was sent out into camp to tour the villages and learn the working of a district.

With me went my servants, ponies and a supply of Government tents, palatial as compared with any that I had hitherto occupied. Likewise, there went with me my 'red-coated *chaprassi*', an official paid by Government to help me support my dignity of 'Eshtunt Sahib'.

Aberigh-Mackay has described the 'red-coated *chaprassi*' as a Colorado beetle—a cupboard skeleton—the exponent of British rule—the mother-in-law of liars and the high priest of extortioners. He is, no doubt, all of these, but in one's early days it gave one a pleasant sense of importance to have such an

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individual attached to one's *entourage*. When I became a Sessions Judge I had three of them!

Sometimes, whilst I struggle along through an English winter of rain, cold, fog and mud, I recall wistfully those camping days during a Punjab 'cold weather'! I can sympathise with that old retired Anglo-Indian colonel whose first winter in England killed him. They took his corpse to Woking; but when they went to remove his ashes, they found him huddled in front of a white-hot wall warming his hands. And he turned his head and growled: "For the Lord's sake shut that door! There's a devil of a draught coming in!"

The zest of those 'cold weather' mornings! One's tea and toast swallowed in the dusk before dawn, with the horses stamping impatiently outside the tents and the reins chill to one's fingers. The ride through dewy fields, where the peasants were already at work; duck flighting over a distant sheet of water, black buck grazing at the foot of the low hills. The sun climbing up to give another day of brilliant sunshine.

The halt at some mud-built village, where the grey-haired old *lambardar* (head-man) would make his report to the Sahib sitting on a rude string-bedstead sipping rather shudderingly the offering of sugared milk from a not too clean brass bowl and thanking his stars that he had been inoculated against enteric. A word with the local *shikāri* about the prospects of an evening shoot; a few sweetmeats purchased for brown-skinned urchins and a rupee left behind for the village *malba* (entertainment fund).

More villages; more reports; a complaint from some old dame against a neighbour who had "done 'er wrong." The midday meal, with one's back to a leafy tree—sandwiches and a bottle of beer. In due course the return to camp on horseback or on a trotting

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camel. The evening tub; and a fire, for the evenings are cold. A meal of three or four courses conjured by means of three bricks and a hole in the ground: in England the *chef's* counterpart in similar circumstances would have simply sat down upon the desert and wept her soul out.

Sometimes with a companion one would shoot in a Raja's territory. Then there would be a State cook sent specially out to the Raja's rest-house; and along the wall of the dining-room would be ranged a row of bottles, in twos, champagne, hock, port, liqueurs—for a guest must want for nothing, though all that the guest desired after a long day on horseback was a bottle of beer at dinner and a whisky-peg before retiring.

One of the quaintest meals that I ever had in camp was a dinner given me by a friend, a Kashmiri Pandit. He inquired whether I had a good appetite; and I replied that I had. He shook his head doubtfully and said that he thought he would only give me 'one course'. That one course consisted of thirteen different dishes of meat and vegetables, each with its appropriate condiment or sauce. I tried them all; they were excellent. But when there was placed in front of me a saucer containing what appeared to be rancid paste covered with silver paper and pink sugar-plums, I excused myself. My host told me that that did not matter, as it was merely his cook's idea of an English pudding. Being strictly orthodox my host could not feed with me, but sat smiling at the head of the table cracking and pretending to eat nuts. He told me that Kashmiris prided themselves on their appetites, and would often partake of 'three courses'.

I have written of the joys of the 'cold weather'; but to my mind the 'hot weather' too had its compensations. Unless one were ill with fever or some other ailment, it was not a bad time. There were

periods when one lived in an oven, or in a Turkish bath; but one's work and play went on as usual, and there was not really much to grumble at except the mosquitoes and prickly heat. The ladies being for the most part in the Hills, men met together more frequently at the Club and got really to know each other. There was the ecstasy of the iced drink, one's gullet submerged in a sea of rapture, and one's bed under the stars!

The spectre of famine arrived in time to postpone my first leave home. I was put in charge of a Famine test work, money being spent on the making of a road. However, it soon became apparent that though there was scarcity, there was no famine: few women came on the works, and when there happened to occur one of the numerous religious festivals not a single worker appeared. I had just begun to hope again for my leave, when there stalked across the land another spectre—bubonic plague.

Plague had broken out in Hong-Kong in 1894, and spread steadily westwards. In India there were special difficulties about coping with it. Plague is conveyed by rat-fleas; and the Government dealt out a supply of rat-traps. But in many of the villages there were Jains, Hindus belonging to the sect whose religion forbids the killing of even the smallest and most obnoxious insects. So the rats were trapped by night; and the Jains set them free in the morning. During the demolition of plague-infected houses a native policeman was burnt alive by the mob. Again, there was the *purdah* difficulty: behind the *purdah* no medical officer might penetrate. What was needed then in India was a cohort of women of the splendid type of Miss Cornelia Sorabji, sympathetic, fearless and versed in Indian ways. There was the difficulty

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about the employment of a serum for inoculation: on one occasion something went wrong and several people died. Moreover, it began to be noised abroad that even if not otherwise harmful inoculation would destroy a man's virility.

From the disease Europeans were singularly immune; but one member of our Punjab Commission contracted it and lived. He is now Lord Hailey, a distinguished ex-Governor of the United Provinces. He was at the time of the pestilence in charge of a plague camp in the horse-breeding colony at Sargodha. A devoted wife, with practically no medical assistance, nursed him back to life.

To set against the memories of those dark days there are one or two bright spots in my recollection. One of them concerns the wife of an important Punjab official, who dispatched to England for repairs a parcel containing some priceless old family lace. Some ten days later the parcel came back from the Bombay Post Office, along with a letter from a postal babu informing her that "owing to the prevalence of plague the export of old rags has been strictly prohibited".

And then there was the affair of the Kalka plague-inspection post. Kalka station lies at the foot of the hills; and from there one journeyed in a clattering two-horse *tonga*, but nowadays by rail or by motor-car, to Simla, the summer-capital of the Government of India. Simla, at all hazards, was to be guarded against infection; for the spectacle of a Member of Council suffering from plague would have been a sight calculated to make even a hardened Congress-*wala* shed tears! So there was established just outside the station an inspection post, in charge of which was placed a youthful member of the I.C.S., enthusiastic and filled to the brim with a sense of duty.

The trouble began one morning, when into the station there rumbled the special train of an Indian potentate accompanied by his suite. The Inspection-officer's printed instructions were explicit: for travellers by the superior classes there would be a medical inspection half-way up the hill to Simla. But as regards all third-class passengers, they were to undergo fumigation and their bedding and clothing were to be disinfected in vats of medicated water.

The Inspection-officer courteously pointed this out; but the potentate would have none of it; and after some colloquy the special train rumbled its way back on its tracks, His Highness's secretary busily inditing long telegrams of protest to the Viceroy and the Government of India.

Meanwhile the Inspection-officer forged ahead with his breakfast; but when half-way through it he became aware of a grinning Sikh policeman soliciting orders. It appeared that another train had arrived, and that from a series of third-class carriages there had emerged a horde of Eurasian clerks with their wives and families *en route* to the headquarters offices in Simla. What was to be done about them?

Again the Inspection-officer was adamant. Of what use are printed orders, if they are not to be carried out? Into the reed-matting shelters for men and for women outside the station were shepherded the protesting clerks and their families; and there, stripped to the buff, half-suffocated by chemical fumes, they sat for a while bewailing their hard fate. Outside the shelters were the cauldrons with their attendant sprites in the shape of loin-clothed coolies; and ever and anon a sprite would plunge a pole into the steaming hell-broth and prong out, it might be, a pair of trousers or a woman's hat. The hats suffered most damage, the colour of their ribbons running

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into streaks, while the artificial flowers and cherries upon them melted into a solid lump. In due course, when their clothing had been dried, there proceeded onwards to Simla a disconsolate crew unable to make any complaint to higher authority, for the fault was their own! All of them had drawn Government allowances for second-class tickets; and had then conspired together to book third-class carriages and to pocket the difference!

At last, in May of 1897, I obtained three months' leave, which allowed me six weeks in England; that being all that I saw of my own country during my first nine and a half years of Indian service.

Almost immediately the voyage home became full of interest. One of our passengers chanced to be a man of whose pluck and whose brains I have for many years been a fervent admirer. Few of us so-called Anglo-Indian 'die-hards' will ever forget the magnificent fight he put up during the recent India controversy; but at the time of which I am speaking he was a particularly cocky young subaltern of the 4th Hussars.

It was the first morning out from Bombay, and I and my cabin-mate, one Smart, member of a Calcutta firm and a noted sprint-runner, awakened very early. We were young; the sun was thinking of shining over the sea; and we were going home! But I willingly admit that it was scarcely the hour for engaging in animated conversation.

From the opposite cabin came the peevish remonstrance: "Stop that damned noise!" Smart and I looked at one another and decided to investigate. Scowling at us from a lower bunk was a very youthful person clad in a beautiful pair of pink silk pyjamas. Smart and I said nothing; but we each took hold of a foot.

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Whilst he voyaged up and down the cook's galley on his back, we realised that our victim, though his language would have done no credit to a present-day B.B.C. announcer, was a born orator. And he was: for his name was Winston Churchill!

I do not think that he bore us any ill-will; and forty years later I was to be again associated with this great statesman. During the India Conference I had written a letter to some newspaper concerning Mr. Gandhi. This produced a letter to me from some Communist, who after hurling at me: "He is a damned sight better man than you will ever be!" ended his effusion with the priceless remark: "You and Brimstone Churchill make a damned fine pair!"

Two more of our passengers were Pike and Deasy, returning from their explorations in Western Tibet. Deasy of the 16th Lancers later on performed various feats with motor-cars. Pike, who had shot big game all over the world, told me that never again would he go shooting in Tibet because of the terrible wind. Incidentally, he owned a hut in Spitzbergen which he had loaned to Monsieur Andrée, the Swedish balloonist. It was from there that in July of the same year the unfortunate balloonist, with two companions, set forth for the North Pole and was never again seen.

At the invitation of these two fellow-passengers I attended, the night after my arrival in England, a meeting of the Royal Geographical Society at the Natural History Museum. I saw many learned men and many cases of stuffed birds; but after a while I wandered into the street and bade a hansom cabby take me to some brighter form of entertainment. Cabby smiled benevolently and said: "'Ave yer seen the Bicycle Tramp, Sir? 'E'd make you larf!" So I went and watched the tramp doing incredible things with a bicycle, at intervals changing his collar, and

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I felt that my first evening in London had not been wasted.

Of this short leave two other items have impressed themselves on my memory. A temporary amateur record for deep-breathing at the physical culture establishment of Mr. Eugen Sandow; and '*Ich grolle nicht*' heard by me for the first time, played by a cornet at the Imperial Institute.

On my return from leave I was posted as Sub-divisional Officer at Pind Dadan Khan, an outpost at the foot of the Salt Range on one of the banks of the Jhelum river.

The inhabitants of the Salt Range were a turbulent lot whose main diversion appeared to be brawling. They used to be brought in to me in large batches to be placed on security to keep the peace. The security they furnished with the utmost good humour; and then departed with their sureties, frequently having another brawl on the way home.

I was the only European in the place; so it was rather a solitary existence; but occasionally I saw some of my own kind who were in charge of the Government Salt Mines. I discovered that from Lahore magnums of port were obtainable; and they would sometimes ride in of an evening to help me with the magnums. They led a hard and desolate life on very small salaries; and often when leave had become due to them, they could not afford to take it. Several of them, I think, had known better days; but one did not ask questions. One of them could sing very well extracts from every known opera.

I amused myself during my solitary evenings by writing a two-act comic operetta, entitled 'The Mahatma'. For this Major Bairnsfather (father of the celebrated Bruce), who was a Cantonment Magistrate in the Punjab and a talented musician, wrote

some most melodious music. The operetta was successfully performed in Simla and Lahore by amateurs; and afterwards in England by a semi-professional company. Later on a Mr. Avalon Collard, who was producing a series of short operettas in London, accepted it. An agreement was drawn up, and Bairnsfather and I saw fame and fortune looming in the distance. But something went wrong with Collard's troupe in South Africa, and the venture came to naught.

I have always been of the opinion that the common folk of India have been most prosperous and contented under a paternal system of government. They like to be given an order by an impartial Englishman and to leave all responsibility with him. Intensely litigious by nature, they are often quite ready to abide by his verdict. Just before I took over charge of Pind Dadan Khan there had been an instance of this.

On the margin of the river there stood a row of dilapidated mud hovels. They were of no conceivable value to any one; but about them two sets of persons had become engaged in a bitter quarrel, and there was the probability of blood being shed. My predecessor announced his intention of settling the dispute on the spot; and on the appointed day, when all the disputants had assembled, he brought along a party of men with shovels and pick-axes and banged all the mud huts into the bed of the river! The cause of the trouble had been removed; both sides roared with laughter and went home. Nowadays, no doubt, in similar circumstances there would have been lengthy articles in the vernacular newspapers and indignant telegrams from Congress-men about the brutal behaviour of one of the dominant race. "The world went very well then!"

## CHAPTER V

THEY created the post of City Magistrate of Lahore; and I was its first incumbent. It was pleasant to be stationed at headquarters, in the city of Zam-zammah and of 'Mahbub Ali', the friend of Kim. 'Mahbub Ali', by the way, was a composite portrait of Afzul and Aslam Khan, the Afghan horse-dealers, who for part of the year lived in the big *serai* amid their screaming stallions and sold us polo-ponies.

Thus I came to know intimately the purlieus of a great native city, its labyrinth of narrow, twisting streets and *bazārs*; and during the investigation of murder cases the inside (always excepting the *purdah* portion) of great barracks of native houses. When in after years I had attained to the post of Sessions Judge, such knowledge was invaluable. Sometimes it was my duty to visit such a house in order that some dame of high degree should affix her thumb-impression on a document. A small jewelled hand would appear from behind the *purdah*-screen; but whether it were really the hand of the lady, or of some small boy, I had no knowledge. In cases such as these the help of Miss Cornelia Sorabji has been most useful; and her books on India should be widely read.

There was plenty of work for me in Court; and in many of the cases there appeared as a witness a young red-headed policeman by the name of Ryall. A few years later he went with a detachment of his police to Africa; and there one night, whilst he was asleep in his railway carriage on a siding, a lion dragged him out through a window and killed him.

From time to time I presided over the Visitors'

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Board at the Lunatic Asylum; and never ceased to marvel at the Belgian nuns, those devoted women who, year by year and through all seasons of the year, cheerfully spent their lives in the service of humanity.

These rather sombre visits were usually relieved by one amusing incident. One of the inmates of the asylum was an ancient man who for many years had been an occupant. When the visiting date became known, he would hide himself, terrified lest we should find him sufficiently recovered to be set free. Informed that there was no possibility of this, he would recover his spirits, clap upon his head the remains of an old 'gent's boater', and strum an imaginary banjo while he sang the praises of myself and my colleagues.

In one of the barred cells there dwelt an old Pathan too dangerous to be allowed more liberty; and his chief object of hatred was the asylum peacock. For some inscrutable reason when there was no one about, the bird would plant itself in front of the bars and stare at him by the hour, driving him to frenzy. But he had his revenge; for one day it approached too close, a hand shot out and dragged it up to the bars, one of its legs came off and the Pathan made a meal of it.

Among my manifold avocations was that of periodically conducting the elections to the Municipal Committee. Since the India Conferences we have heard a great deal about elections and an enlarged electorate, with new-fangled devices such as 'frogs' and 'bicycles' and the like to be affixed to ballot-boxes for the benefit of the illiterate; but I doubt not that elections all over India are still what they were in my time—an utter farce.

For several hours I would sit in the chief police-station, while through it poured the unending stream of free and enlightened voters. But I knew, everyone knew, that abroad in the city's streets were the touts of

the various candidates coercing or blarneying the weak-minded, buying the votes of the more strong-minded at the price of two or four annas apiece. And when the results of the elections had been declared, a crowd of disappointed candidates would go rushing to the telegraph-office to despatch long telegrams to higher authority about the scandalous manner in which the elections had been conducted. There was no ill-feeling against myself: it was simply the usual procedure of the disappointed Indian candidate. It helped him to save his face; and there may have been some vague idea that someone would be sufficiently idiotic to order a fresh election, thereby enabling him to work out a more successful method of nobbling voters.

One had, of course, in respect of Court cases to safeguard oneself against being nobbled unawares. On one occasion I wanted to have a dog-cart painted; and the English firms appeared to think that it should be done with paint composed of diamond dust and refined gold. I received an offer from an Indian firm to do the work for a sum which seemed amazingly reasonable. Six months later the proprietor turned up in my Court grinning confidently, as the defendant in a rather important case!

On another occasion I had to visit a temple in connection with some dispute about a right of way. On my arrival at the spot the pleader on one side respectfully suggested that, as the precincts of the temple were holy ground, I ought to remove my shoes. The pleaders and the parties to the suit were all of them Hindus; but the pleader on the opposite side maintained stoutly, backed by his clients, that as I was present in a 'judicial' capacity, a dispenser in fact of godlike justice, I might be excused from complying with this formality. However, I removed my shoes and tramped shudderingly through a succession of

filthy courtyards in my socks; smiling cynically to myself at the thought of how the parties with the weaker case were ready in the hope of gaining my favour to forgo their religious observances.

My most unpleasant duty was an occasional visit to the Jail when a murderer was to be executed. Most of them met their fate with oriental impassivity; and only once did I see a condemned man collapse upon the scaffold. But it is a ghastly thing to watch a human being drop suddenly out of sight, to see and hear the rope jerking and creaking with the strain. And then there was the wailing of the women gathered outside the Jail walls until the last grim penalty had been paid.

Most of my leave in those days was spent at Simla.

The summer capital has always had a reputation for gaiety; and it was particularly gay until the advent of Lords Curzon and Kitchener turned it into a place of more stern endeavour.

Besides polo and gymkhana at Annandale there were picnics and dinner-parties and dances innumerable, the most coveted invitations being those for the entertainments given by the 'Most Hospitable Order of the Knights of the Black Heart.'

Princely and very exclusive, the Order had among its original founders Colonel Newnham Davis, Dwarf of Blood of the old 'Pink 'Un'. Bachelorhood was a qualification for membership; though grass-widowerhood was permissible, the basic rule being that a Knight must not be living in 'open matrimony'.

The Simla Amateur Dramatic Society (one of the best amateur societies in the world) was then in its heyday; and one of its most noted performers was the present Lord Baden-Powell. One of his most successful rôles was that of the leading character in *The Geisha*. And he was as good an actor off the stage as on it.

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Although he was probably the best known man in Simla, he and Agnew of the Chief's Staff masqueraded for one whole evening disguised as two Italian Counts. In the front of a box at our little Gaiety theatre 'B.P.' sat jabbering a mixture of Italian and broken English, going on afterwards to a gay supper-party at the Châlet. It was only when he began to make Italian operatic love to a lady (who was in the know) to the indignation of her husband (who was not) that he thought it desirable to throw off his disguise.

Our best burlesques were written by Major Hobday (a Gunner) and my friend Freddie Fraser, who later on wrote the lyrics for the well-known 'Jhelum River' songs. It was at about this time that Fraser became involved in a law-suit with the late Mr. George Edwardes, in what was known as the 'Cingalee' case. Fraser had written a comic opera, its scene laid in Kashmir, of which Edwardes had approved. Certain difficulties arose between them; and when the 'Cingalee' was produced, Fraser held that much of his material had been used without his permission. The case was heard by the late Lord Darling; and became a Society picnic, with several famous actors (including the late Hayden Coffin) appearing as witnesses. In the end the plaintiff was awarded some thousands of pounds as damages; George Edwardes decided to appeal, and eventually a compromise was reached. But what with the fees of expensive lawyers and other expenses I am afraid that my friend did not reap much benefit.

The supper parties at the Châlet after the theatre were festive affairs; and after supper the beauty and fashion of Simla would often indulge in various infantile pastimes. One of these games I mention for a special reason. It required two performers; one of whom knelt on the floor with his head bowed between

two chairs, representing a duck with its head submerged below the water. The other performer sat on a chair in front of him with his arms outstretched, ready to box the duck's ears whenever its quacking head should pop up above the surface. The game was, I suppose, a variant of 'The Nigger in the Barrel'; and the best 'duck' that ever I saw was the man known to his associates as 'Wug'. No one was ever quick enough to box 'Wug's' ears! He is now Lord Wigram, who after being an A.D.C. to Lords Elgin and Curzon and on the Staff during their Royal Highnesses' visit to India in 1905, became Private Secretary to His Majesty King George the Fifth.

I spent part of one leave as the guest of General Sir Stuart Beatson, who was I.G. of Imperial Service Troops; my fellow guest being that magnificent old Indian ruler and soldier, H.H. Sir Partab Singh, Maharaja of Idar. One of his mottoes was: "Rajput and Englishmen, all brothers"; and there was never a finer gentleman or sportsman in India. On the Frontier, in China and in the Great War he played his part; and his great ambition (never realised) was to die at the head of his troops fighting for England. "Happy for me I getting killed," he once said, "dying like soldier-man." As a fellow guest no one could have been more delightful; and after dinner he would love to describe a game of polo played during the afternoon. His account of it would be something like this: "You remembering, Sahib? I hitting back-hander, you going up. Then I going—you coming—I dropping back—you going—I coming—" and so on. At the end of the recital one had but the vaguest idea of what had happened: but the dear old fellow had enjoyed giving his description.

A very interesting personality in Simla was Mr.

A. M. Jacob, the art dealer and jeweller. Whether he was really a Persian or an Armenian no one ever discovered. He furnished three novelists with a character for their books. He was 'Mr. Isaacs' in Marion Crawford's novel of that name: he was 'Lurgan Sahib,' the Healer of Sick Pearls, in *Kim*: and he also figured in Colonel Newnham Davis's novel *Jadoo*. He could speak six languages (three of them oriental) fluently. There were often *séances* held at his house. and every native in Simla believed that he had the power of *jādu* (magic)—"the white magic, which gives the power to see, and sometimes the power to save."

And speaking of *jādu*, it was at Simla that I took part in an extraordinary performance given by an amateur clairvoyant.

I was staying with a friend of mine, who told me that there was in his office an Indian clerk who had this strange power; and we decided to test him. The clerk was a pleasant young fellow, very proud of his gift; and after dinner my friend and I and two ladies began the experiment.

We bandaged his eyes with a scarf, and over it tied a thick bath-towel. I stood behind him, and pressing upon the towel with my fingers rammed his eyeballs into their sockets, I am afraid a little severely. He had, of course, instructed us as to what we should do in order to test him. One of the ladies picked up from a table a book which happened to be *A Window in Thrums*, and holding it open in front of him guided his fore-finger over the printed page. As his finger touched each word or phrase, he would slowly read it out to us, stumbling occasionally over the pronunciation of some word known only to inhabitants of the kale-yard. From time to time she shifted his finger to the blank margin of a page;

and then he would say politely: "Please, lady, I see nothing."

I am quite unable to explain this phenomenon. It was physically impossible for him to have seen normally. Whether he could read the words from our minds as we watched the printed page, or whether he possessed some abnormal power of vision which defied the scarf, the towel and the pressure of my fingers I must leave others to determine.

Lord Curzon's advent as Viceroy toned down Simla's light-hearted gaiety considerably. A worker himself, he expected others to be equally diligent. There was no more summoning of toilers from their offices in the middle of the day to take part in rehearsals at the Gaiety Theatre!

He could be genial at times; but he was always the 'superior purzon'. What, I fancy, we admired about Lord Curzon besides his brains and ability was his brave mastery over the pain which so constantly beset him.

He was at all times the embodiment of Viceregal dignity. One can easily credit the story in Lady Minto's book—*India: Minto and Morley*—about the duck-shoot, when his *machan* collapsed and precipitated him into the water. "The officials," she says, "have never forgotten that day and still turn pale as they speak of it!" In similar circumstances Lord Minto would have roared with laughter and have treasured up the episode as a good story.

Curzon's personal Staff, I think, liked him; but he exacted from them the utmost respect. The unlucky aide who (unaware of Curzon's presence) walked into the A.D.C.'s room near Viceregal Lodge porch with the question: "Anyone seen my Imperial Bounder?" was soon afterwards proceeding down to the Plains with great rapidity.

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Not the least of his many services to India was the intense interest he took in the preservation of her ancient buildings and monuments, notably in the case of the Taj Mahal. In this connection I wonder how many people know that the Taj was nearly lost to the world about one hundred years ago?

Lord William Cavendish Bentinck in 1833 became the first Governor-General of India. His administration was memorable for the abolition of Suttee and for the suppression of the Thugs; but he was clearly not free from vandalism.

The Taj Mahal at the time had been allowed to fall into a state of disrepair and disrepute. Its enclosure was overgrown with scrub-jungle, and the building had become the resort of vagabonds and criminals. The Governor-General by way of remedy conceived the astounding idea of issuing a proclamation to the effect that any builder or contractor might become lawfully possessed of the materials of the building as recompense for dismantling and taking them away! This astonishing piece of vandalism would in all probability have been perpetrated but for the courageous and enlightened intervention of Sir John Strachey, the Chief Justice of the Province, who himself made a personal protest to the Governor-General and carried his point. It was owing to him that this exquisite work of art, the materialised dream of a poet who was a great king and a great lover, Shah Jahan, was spared from destruction for the wonder and delight of later generations.

To digress for a moment, how many people are aware that a somewhat similar instance of luckily-defeated vandalism was actually contemplated some eighty years ago in our own city of Canterbury? Visitors to that venerable city know well the West Gate, with its massive pair of drum towers and arch

spanning the roadway. This minor fortress was built in 1380 by Archbishop Sudbury, Chancellor of England under King Richard II. From 1543 till as late as 1829 it was used as a gaol. In the year 1850 Mr. Wombwell, father of all menageries, wished to make a spectacular entry into the city with his elephants and triumphal cars, and found the West Gate arch too low and narrow for their passage. He calmly sent to the Corporation a request for the demolition of the entire building, pointing out that the value of the materials would more than defray the cost. With less understandable calm the City Fathers met and discussed the matter: and the voting was even, for and against the proposal! Fortunately the Mayor, though he cared nothing for archaeology, happened to be somewhat of a puritan who disapproved of menageries as being worldly, so he gave his casting vote against the motion to destroy, and the West Gate was saved!

With both Indians and Europeans Lord Curzon made himself unpopular. As regards Europeans there was the case of the 9th Lancers, to which I shall refer later on. As regards the Indian community there was the Partition of Bengal and his pronouncement in a speech that Hindu religious writings condoned the telling of falsehoods. He apparently forgot that in the East of all places, when it is a question of religion, the wise man walks very warily.

Though he could be grandly generous, he could be amazingly petty in small matters. He presented Bodiam Castle to the nation; and he loaned half his house (now the home of the ' Savage Club ') in Carlton House Terrace to the Prisoners of War Relief Committee. Yet if a door handle came off, he objected to paying for its replacement, and he thought the brand of caterer's champagne supplied for Viceregal dances

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“good enough” to send as a Christmas present to a British Cavalry regiment during the War. In Simla, Lady Curzon (most charming, and certainly the most beautiful woman whom I have ever seen) must not sing in her own drawing-room to her guests after dinner; so no one heard her fine voice except intimate friends in her private apartments. And then (to quote Lady Minto’s book again) there is his reported remark about his successor, a splendid horseman and former rider in the Grand National: “Imagine sending to succeed *me* a gentleman who only jumps hedges!”

During one Simla season his precise mind must have suffered considerable annoyance because of his mother-in-law, who came out to pay him a visit. She was a kindly, homely American lady, with a wonderful gift for malapropisms. Some of them, no doubt, were authentic: others Simla invented for her. An authentic one was her remark that on the last occasion when her husband had been wearing fancy dress, he had been attired in “the garbage of a monk”. The following two instances were, I think, *ben trovato*.

In the course of conversation, the lady’s neighbour at a dinner-party chattily inquired whether she had done much travelling?

“Oh, yes,” she said, “this time last year we were in Turkey.”

“In Turkey? Then, I suppose you saw the Dardanelles?”

“Why, yes indeed,” replied the lady, who was not going to admit that she had been anywhere without meeting the best people. “Why, yes indeed! Dined with them—dined with them!”

And then there was this story. For some reason or other everyone had taken to reading a new edition of *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*.

“Oh, don’t you simply *love* old Omar?” asked a

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gushing acquaintance; and was taken aback by the lady's answer: "Well, I haven't read much of him. Only parts of his *Odyssey* in English."

But Simla was always inventing some nonsense for the general amusement—including nicknames descriptive of the individuals who bore them. Thus we had 'Whiteley's Remnants,' 'Undulating Ursula,' and many others. But perhaps the most ingenious invention was one contrived for a lady who answered to the Greek name Diamantopoulos. Simla put on its thinking-cap and in due course evolved: Dammit-I'm-not-a-towel-horse.

I personally came under Lord Curzon's notice by reason of a ridiculous song, which I used to call 'Pessimism'. I had found the verses in some magazine; and the Private Secretary to the Punjab Lieutenant-Governor had set them to a fittingly dismal tune. Here they are:

Nothing to breathe but air;  
Nothing to eat but food:  
Nothing to wear but clothes  
To keep us from going nude.  
Nothing to do but things,  
Quick as a flash they're gone.  
Nowhere to fall but off,  
Nowhere to sit but on!

Nothing to quench but a thirst;  
Nowhere to sleep but in bed;  
Nothing to have but what we've got;  
And no one to bury but dead.  
Nothing to weep but tears;  
Ah me! alas and alack!  
Nowhere to go but out,  
Nowhere to come but back!

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Nothing to see but sights;  
Never a gleam in the gloom;  
Nothing but days and nights;  
Ah! for the rest of the tomb!  
Nothing to comb but our hair;  
Nothing to wed but a wife;  
Only to suffer and bear,  
What is the value of Life???

Sometimes, towards the close of a very high-brow concert at the Town Hall, an A.D.C. would come across to me with a message:

“His Excellency wishes for ‘Pessimism’.”

## CHAPTER VI

AFTER some months of Lahore as City Magistrate I was appointed 'bear-leader' to a youthful Raja—not yet upon his throne—of an old-fashioned Sikh State in the Punjab. I spent some two years in the State.

My first year there was a very pleasant one; for though there was a Council of Regency of three notables, a Sikh, a Mohammedan and a Hindu, I was to no inconsiderable extent the Raja. Though the Punjab Government had supplied me with no office staff, I knew more or less what was going on; the State officials used to come to me to discuss affairs; and for several hours a day I sat with the young Raja in *durbār* helping him to the best of my ability to give a decision on such matters as came before him. Naturally I acquired some insight into the Indian view of things and the method of government in a State which was then the reverse of modern.

At all times my relations with the young ruler were most cordial; and when work for the day was over we played polo together, or went pig-sticking or hawking on elephants or on horseback.

I lived in a huge bungalow crammed with about a thousand pounds' worth of furniture, much of it consisting of mirrors such as the Indian potentate so greatly admires. The bungalow was set in a spacious garden full of peacocks; and since the birds were sacred I could not thin them out. In the 'hot weather' when I slept on the roof their discordant caterwauling made me wish to arise and slaughter them all.

The night of my arrival was not, to quote Mr. Longfellow, 'filled with music'. I awoke to hear a

deafening din near the servants' quarter in the garden. It was caused by my cook, newly engaged just before I left Lahore, coming home from the *bazar* blind-drunk between two friends. In less than an hour he had departed for the railway station nine miles distant along with his luggage on an *ekka*—the two-wheeled rattle-trap of India—my servants having injunctions to place him on board the first train which came in. I sometimes wonder where he woke up; and I sometimes think how convenient it would be if one could place a recalcitrant English cook on board, say, the Tuppenny Tube and allow her to disappear out of one's life.

As at Pind Dadan Khan my existence was very solitary, in the sense that I had for most part of the time no man of my own race to talk to. Occasionally an inspecting officer of Imperial Service Troops would arrive for a day and a night; and I would try to make him stay for two. But I cannot see that I had much to grumble about. I had plenty of interesting work; and though in those days there was no such thing as 'Wireless', I had books and pens, ink and paper. If a man cannot bear a period of solitude he must be a poor creature.

Every now and again we are called upon by the newspapers to bewail the lot of some lighthouse keeper who, by reason of storms, has not been relieved for a week. If it be meant that he has been without food, he deserves our pity; and the obvious remedy would be to keep in every lighthouse an emergency supply of tinned food. But otherwise, why pity him? Not long ago I read in a newspaper about an English village, five miles from a Cinema, the inhabitants of which felt so 'lonely' that they had taken to inserting their heads into gas-ovens. Yet all over the British Empire there are Englishmen living as solitary souls among people

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of an alien race—sometimes among savages, and not too safe—who manage to survive the ordeal. To be sure, where they live there are no gas-ovens!

The only times when I felt the strain were when I had insomnia. I had two horses and three ponies, and would ride them round the racecourse in order to become physically tired out; but physical fatigue cannot banish insomnia. One would lie restless under a flapping *punkah* until, having decided that sleep was unobtainable, one would spend the remainder of the night in a long chair in the verandah smoking till the dawn. But two days visit to the Punjab Club at Lahore would usually set things right.

During many of my solitary evenings I amused myself putting together in book form a quantity of would-be humorous sketches and scraps of verse which had appeared in newspapers. The result was a booklet which I christened with the name of *Damfool Smith Sahib*—that being the native pronunciation of the name 'Dalrymple Smith', one of the characters in the book. Having completed it I offered it to Messrs. Wheeler, the railway bookstall agents, for two hundred and fifty rupees. Fortunately they did not accept the offer, so I printed 500 copies at my own expense. After these had been sold, the 'Civil and Military Gazette' Press undertook publication giving me a royalty. Of this erudite work there have been ten editions totalling 13,500 copies; and it is sold on the railway bookstalls as *The Indian Comic Classic*.

One of my duties was to ward off or, at any rate, to keep some control over the tradesmen and tradesmen's touts who came swarming into the State. Of these gentry Kipling has given a picture in 'The Naulahka'.

They would spend a week or so in the Guest House at the Chief's expense; and then, having at length

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collected a goodly instalment on account of their bills and having sold a fresh line of goods, they would disappear for a season. In the interests of business there were no depths in which some of them would not grovel; and I remember one German tradesman who peppered his letters to the Raja with "You are my King", and ended them with "Your poor old slave".

There were, of course, firms of jewellers, Indian and European; but one extremely large bill was that from the photographer. One firm of photographers, I remember, also ran a sideline in pedigree bulldogs and Imperial Tokay.

The money squandered on photographs would sometimes reach a scandalous total. The chief's portrait would be taken in every possible dress and in every possible position; and prints would be ordered by the hundred ranging from the largest size known to photographic science down to the miniature sizes reproduced on ivory.

And it was the same with firms purveying other goods. I can remember seeing in a bootmaker's shop a row of boots and shoes apparently suited to the requirements of a doll. They were of every variety from riding-boots down to dancing-pumps, and were intended for a young chief of the mature age of four. Within the year, I presume, he grew out of them and the firm obtained a fresh order.

Many of the articles supplied at high prices were pure trash—for instance, an extraordinary toy displayed for my edification which was looked upon as miraculous. It consisted of a small figure of the Madonna seated in a red plush arm-chair inside an empty whisky bottle; and was in reality no more wonderful than those appalling pictures (for which there used to be a great demand) presenting to the interested observer Lord Roberts, a battleship, or the

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winner of the Derby according as they were viewed from the front or from either side.

Some idea of the spaciousness of those days might be gained by the inspection of a certain maharaja's equipage—still preserved as a curiosity—which he caused to be constructed on railway-carriage wheels with a view to taking his entire *Zenāna* out for an airing. It was drawn by thirty mules; and was used once.

Scents and essences from Paris for the potentate's bath might cost as much as seventy-five rupees (say, five pounds) a day. In some States money might be wasted on account of arrogance, or of superstition, or on some whim worthy of Caligula. Before now a fortune has been expended on the marriage of a mouse with a doll. And not so many years have passed since a certain Indian ruler used to find entertainment in chasing black buck across country in expensive motor-cars.

An old Nawāb, nettled by the remark of a shop assistant that a rifle he was exhibiting was 'rather expensive', straightway purchased the entire contents of the shop of a Calcutta gunsmith in order to show that money was no object to him. And there was an extremely youthful raja who used to amuse himself occasionally by shooting rupees at birds with a catapult.

Lavish expenditure in the case of oriental marriage ceremonies is quite understandable; but the Raja of a small hill State who married four wives at the same time must have had a pretty bill to pay! His two former wives had died; but whether, in doubling their number, he took for his motto 'Safety in numbers' or was merely acting on the principle that one 'cannot have too much of a good thing' he alone could tell us.

Hospitality was and still is one of the main attributes of an oriental potentate; and a guest must

always bear in mind that it is not for him even with the best of intentions to question the manner of his entertainment. As an instance of this it may be related how a visitor once found to his annoyance that whenever he partook of a whisky ' peg ' or a glass of port he was credited with having drunk the entire contents of the bottle, the portion remaining becoming someone's perquisite. Wishing to save his host's pocket he told him of his discovery; but the chief was not at all pleased. Very courteously, but firmly, he explained that he would rather submit to such peculations than have it supposed that he cared how much was expended on matters of hospitality.

In another State it was the custom to provide daily a new sponge and a fresh cake of soap for each guest.

This theory of a host's duty towards his guests was carried out equally in the case of Indian visitors; and a Nawâb of my acquaintance showed but little surprise when a wedding-party cut to pieces the tent-ropes and even the Persian carpets in their tents for the purpose of tying up their baggage.

The old type of princely spendthrift is passing away; and all over India nowadays may be found enlightened rulers capable of limiting their personal expenditure and paying due regard to the conditions affecting their poorer subjects. But what struck me forcibly in my day was the manner in which, side by side with lavish extravagance, there was operating a system of parsimonious economy.

To be sure, it affected mainly the minor officials and employés, some of whom barely received a living wage; a state of affairs which I did my best to remedy, for who could blame them in the circumstances for resorting to ' graft ' ?

Take the case of the postman. Reckoned in English money his salary worked out to only five shillings a

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month. He had his own method of augmenting it. Passing along the *bazār* he would halt in front of the shop of Mul Chand, the merchant; and there would follow this dialogue:

“Mul Chand, *salām*! There has come for you a letter from your son at Ambala.”

“A letter from my son—may it bring good news! Give it me!”

“Doubtless the news will be good, Mul Chand; but two annas is the price of the letter.”

And until the money had been paid the letter would remain in the post-bag.

In my State a quaint economy was in practice with regard to whips. We used to drive the nine miles from the capital to the railway station in four-in-hand barouches; but no whips were supplied to their drivers. It had been found that they invariably broke them against the overhanging branches of trees on either side of the roadway. Accordingly, before starting each *jehu* arranged beside him on the box-seat a small pile of pebbles and clods of earth; and with these he pelted his leaders with extreme accuracy when he wished to quicken their pace.

In a neighbouring State the old Maharaja had invented a most practical method of money-saving. At the hour fixed for the morning meal a gong was beaten in the Jail and the prisoners trooped forth into the town to feed with their relations. The arrangement saved the State a good deal of money and involved no risk whatever, since after the meal the relations always carefully escorted their erring kinsmen back to durance vile. Had any prisoner been so unwise as to escape, no bones would have been made about incarcerating his entire family from the great-grandmother downwards.

It was on the border between this State and my own

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that I came across quite an original piece of 'graft'. I had noticed in a field by the roadside a small tent with a charcoal brazier smouldering in front of it. Outside the tent sat a native hospital assistant, who informed me that he was in charge of a Plague-post. His methods I discovered later; and the procedure was as follows:

Every traveller who passed along the road was bidden to turn aside, and was informed that he would not be allowed to travel farther until he had been disinfected. A small fee was charged; and the medical man then cast a pinch of some chemical upon the brazier, puffed with his lips the smoke over the traveller, and the traveller was then permitted to resume his journey!

As I have said, some of the minor officials were none too well paid; but to some extent what they lacked in salary was made good by fine resounding titles. It was such an official who sent me the most delightful Christmas card that I have ever received. It was extremely ornate, but he had evidently not troubled to read the legend inside it which ran thus:

What shall I wish you, my Dearest Heart?  
Happiness ne'er from you depart!  
I'll hold you close in my arms and say:  
"God bless my own darling girl to-day!"

*Signed: MIR AFTĀB HUSSAIN,  
Superintendent for the Entertainment  
of European Guests.*

The administration of justice in some of the old-fashioned States in those days would have seemed according to English ideas most unsatisfactory. In my own State there was one rule of which I heartily disapproved. Certain high officials were exempt from personal appearance before the State Courts; they

might not even be summoned as witnesses for cross-examination; and such evidence as they might choose to give would be written down at their private residences. The value of such evidence can be easily estimated.

Old-fashioned methods of punishing the humbler class of offender, if drastic, were perhaps effective. He might be punished twice over—once on his own account and once in place of his absconding accomplice. He might be confined in a cage with a rope attached to his manacles, which his guards had orders to jerk every two hours to prevent him from getting too much sleep. If he were a known bad character in a village, his presence in his house during the night hours would be assured by constant visits from the village watchman howling outside his door: ‘Oh, Din Mahomed, art thou at home?’ There were methods of silencing the local Dogberry; but they, too, were unpleasant.

Punishments for venial misdemeanours were sometimes very severe, and the guest in an Indian State had to be wary about making complaints. On one occasion a visitor staying at the State Guest-House casually remarked to a minor official that the butter at breakfast might have been fresher. The official expressed his deep concern, and the visitor naturally thought no more of the matter. However, on the occasion of his next visit he missed the aged *khansama*, an old friend of his and really an excellent cook, and found to his dismay that as the result of his trivial complaint the caterer was undergoing a sentence of three months’ rigorous imprisonment. The Chief’s sense of hospitality had been outraged, and much tactful persuasion had to be employed to obtain a remission of the sentence.

One particularly unpleasant duty which I had to perform was connected with a band of dacoits, who suddenly commenced their depredations in my State

and the one next to it. These highwaymen took to holding up whole villages, robbing wholesale, sometimes committing arson and, occasionally, murder. They were exceedingly elusive; and unfortunately often had the sympathy of the peasantry which they cultivated by burning the account-books of the money-lenders, thereby destroying all evidence of the villagers' debts.

Tomkins (afterwards Sir Lionel Tomkins, Inspector-General of Police in the Punjab) was loaned to the State to lay these gentry by the heels; and he arrived one evening with an immense dog after the manner of 'Strickland' and his 'Tietjens' of the Kipling stories.

One of his captures was a notorious dacoit who had committed at least three very brutal murders. His death-warrant was signed by the Maharaja of Patiala (the father of the present Maharaja); and it was decided to make an example by having a public execution which Tomkins and I had to supervise.

When we reached our camp the night before, we found that sightseers had already begun to collect from the villages; and on the open plain the State officials had constructed a gallows—but without any arrangement for a 'drop'. They explained that they had not thought this necessary, as the man would be dead within five minutes of the hanging! He would be dragged off the ground, they said, by a man of the lowest caste who had a very agile little son; and the son would swarm up one of the poles and jump up and down on the murderer's shoulders.

Naturally we could not agree to this, and we thought out a more humane method of execution. There were in use in those parts heavy baggage-carts, the tilts of which were very high; and we caused two of them to be placed back to back. Across the intervening space was balanced the top of our camp-table.

So to provide a 'drop' it would only be necessary to pull away one of the carts.

While we were having our evening meal outside our tents, a message came that the dacoit's old father was anxious to bid his son farewell. I was ready to grant this request; but Tomkins urged that the old man's clothes should first be searched. This was done; and hidden in the soles of his shoes was found enough opium to have killed three men!

Next morning the murderer, having grasped the tail of a cow and performed sundry other ceremonies, put forward a plea that he should be allowed to swagger through the double line of onlookers and show himself off. This we could not permit; and after he had been blindfolded he was guided from the cart on to the table top—and I am thankful to say that the improvised 'drop' worked even better than we had expected.

In the course of the investigations it had come to light that one of my Raja's own relations had been in league with the dacoits, protecting them and taking his share of the loot. It was out of the question to proceed against him; but another official, also implicated, was brought to trial. For several days in a stifling Court, Tomkins sat watching the trial hour by hour to see that justice did not miscarry. After his conviction and sentence this official for some time worked in chains in my garden; but I learned that after my departure from the State he was appointed to an even higher post than the one he had forfeited. Such a state of affairs in England would be comparable with, say, the conviction of the Foreign Secretary for forgery followed by his appointment as Lord Chief Justice. In an Indian State everything depends on the whim and favour of the Chief; and the lightning changes of official appointments are comparable with the lightning changes of Cabinet Ministers in England.

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It was while Tomkins was with me that a small episode occurred which ever afterwards furnished us with a slogan. One of our visitors was a retired General of Sappers, the Marquis de Bourbel, a most courteous, kindly, simple-hearted old gentleman who was interested in the construction of a small State railway.

One morning at breakfast we found a paragraph in a newspaper telling us that the late Marchese Marconi had successfully sent a wireless message across a courtyard. There was also a 'leader' on the subject forecasting the time when wireless messages would be speeding through the ether in every direction.

The old General listened goggling, and then perfectly solemnly put to us this question:

"What about the poor birds?"

I am afraid we dissolved into irreverent laughter at the picture conjured up by his remark: crows and vultures all over India falling dead from the sky slain by Wireless!

## CHAPTER VII

My second year in the State was not as pleasant as my first for obvious reasons.

With great pomp and ceremony the young ruler was installed upon the *gadi* by the then Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab; he became a Ruling Chief and my functions as 'bear-leader' came to an end.

After the installation I continued to interview State officials; but soon I received instructions that I was to do this no longer, that the Chief must learn to rule his own subjects, and that my duties should be confined to tendering him advice when it should appear to be necessary.

As I have said, I had no staff of my own; and very naturally my sources of information rapidly dried up. The officials I met thenceforward only as friends; all matters affecting the State were for the Raja's private ear. I knew that there were intrigues afoot; and I knew of the evil influences which beset a young oriental ruler; but I could only do my best as a friend to warn him against them.

Such information as I did receive was not of a satisfactory nature, and was very difficult to check as to its accuracy. A scrap of paper scrawled on by some anonymous writer might be thrown into my verandah after dark; and there was the *bazar* gossip retailed by my Pathans.

My Pathans were soldiers in the State regiment, who used to come to my bungalow of an evening to coach me for the Higher Standard examination in Pushtu. The grammar and books I had to study by myself; and their instruction consisted of general

conversation and the singing of indecorous frontier love-songs to the twanging of a *rabāb*. But I had really very little work to do and no one else to talk to, and I was very glad of their company.

There was grief when at my first appearance for the examination I failed to pass. I realised that I had taken the matter too lightly. I had already passed three language examinations; and the procedure had always been the same. After disposing of the books and the written exercise, one went out into a verandah with the examination *munshi* for the *vivâ voce*. He was never permitted to say a word; but one fired at him a volley of sentences prepared beforehand about the state of the weather, the crops and so forth; after which one returned to the examination-hall to hear the *munshi* report that one spoke the language like a native. And all was well!

The H.S. Pushtu was quite a different proposition. On my board were Ridgway (now General Ridgway) of the 40th Pathans and one of his brother-officers. They had taken a vow not to pass anyone incapable of defending a man for his life on a court-martial. So when a large and hairy Pathan was brought into the room and Ridgway said: "Ask him what he does when he gets boils on the back of his neck"—I threw up the sponge. I departed, a sadder and wiser man, to really learn the language, not possessing the resourcefulness of the Indian student who will put "B.A.Fail" after his name and write "Help me, oh my God!" upon a blank sheet of examination-paper. When six months later I managed to pass there was great rejoicing, a great feast for my Pathans of goats' flesh and sherbet, and the indecorous love-songs went on far into the night.

Speaking of examinations, the quaintest failure whom I ever met was a veterinary officer attached to a British Cavalry regiment, who had failed six times

to pass the Lower Standard in Hindustani. He admitted that he confined his study of the language to the "hot weather", when he would lie upon a bed with his *munshi* squatting in a corner. After a time he would become weary of his lesson, and would bid the *munshi* read aloud from the works of Shakespeare. He told me that the spectacle of the fat *munshi* cooing mincingly as Juliet in the balcony scene was one of the funniest sights he had ever witnessed. But it explained why he had failed to pass.

Though I was on the best of terms with the Raja and his officials, I occasionally felt annoyance at the attitude of some of the latter towards the Boer War. The War was not going too well for us; and when there happened to be a British reverse, certain of the officials would come to me to offer their condolences. But their condolences did not always ring quite true. There was no doubt in my mind that they wished England to win; but I could sense a feeling of smirking satisfaction that the almighty British Rāj should be finding it so difficult to subdue a collection of farmers. Though not quite the same, it was akin to the feeling widespread in India when Japan beat Russia, and an Eastern nation hammered a European nation. It was, I think, La Rochefoucauld who wrote: "*Dans les malheurs de nos meilleurs amis il y a toujours quelque chose que ne nous déplaît pas.*"

During my abundant leisure I amused myself by having a tilt at Government over the matter of the twenty-seven rupees four annas of which I had been deprived some years before on my arrival at Deolali rest-camp.

For my pay and pension contribution the State was responsible, so the Punjab Accountant-General could not make any deduction from my pay. One morning the dear old white-bearded State Treasurer came to me

in great distress. He had received a notice from the A.G. at Lahore saying that, as the rate of pension contribution had been raised and the State had continued contributing at the old rate, a small fine had been imposed. This was terrible! It was not, he explained, the negligible amount of the fine; it was the disgrace of it. Such a thing had never before happened through all the years during which he and his father and his grandfather had been Treasurer. I joyfully asked him to let me take over the correspondence.

I wrote pointing out that as no notice of enhancement had been given the fine was unfair. The A.G.'s office replied, quoting Rule X., paragraph V., of the Regulations. After one or two letters had passed I had a bright idea and started sending my letters without any stamps on them. This opened up a second line of correspondence.

I and the office babus enjoyed ourselves for a time; and then I happened to meet the Accountant-General in Lahore. He expressed the hope that I would not continue this tiresome correspondence about so trifling an amount; and I said that I was ready to continue it as long as he did. We heard no more of the matter!

About the middle of that 'hot weather' I accompanied the Raja on a visit to the hill-station of Mussoorie.

It was a gay spot with none of the officialdom of Simla; in fact, as Mr. Fitch used to say—he was proprietor of the general shop and an admirable actor—"There's only one society in Mussoorie, and we're all in it."

I lived at the excellent Club where General Sir Bindon Blood told us youngsters *shikār* stories; and performed much in amateur theatricals. To my

surprise I found myself cast for the leading rôle in the comic opera—*Paul Jones*—thereby unworthily assuming the mantle of Miss Agnes Huntington whom I had often seen playing the part in London. It was during the run of this piece that I received a most fulsome and anonymous love-letter concluding with any number of crosses and the words: “All for You!” I was suitably impressed until I discovered that the writer was a poor lunatic.

When the Rains came we amused ourselves with roller-skating at the Rink. Considerable mirth was caused by the antics of a certain Indian potentate who was anxious to essay the pastime. Naturally it would have been inconsistent with his dignity to go sprawling all over the Rink, so the management contrived for him a stout wicker-work cage which hung from his shoulders and stuck out all round. Thus equipped he could stagger a few paces and then collapse in any direction without actually measuring his length upon the floor.

This visit to Mussoorie held far-reaching consequences for my Chief.

There was in the place a Dutch balloonist along with his wife and stepdaughter, who were touring India giving balloon exhibitions; and the Raja invited them to visit the State after his return there.

In due course they came; and on learning that the Raja was seeing a great deal of them I asked him for an interview. At the end of it he assured me that they would be leaving as soon as the balloon ascent had been made. I am thankful to say that I at once passed on this information to the Punjab Government.

The balloon ascent took place the same afternoon; and I witnessed an amazingly brave feat on the part of the Dutchman. The balloon had been held close to the ground by a number of coolies clinging on to

ropes; and when it soared upwards we saw to our dismay that one of the men had not released his hold and was being carried upwards still clinging desperately to a rope. We mounted and rode hard in the wake of the balloon, expecting every moment to see the coolie drop to certain death; but we had reckoned without the balloonist! We saw him come steadily down the rope, reach the man, get an arm round him and hang on grimly until at length the balloon came to earth. And a fine ending it would have been, if that had been the end of the story!

Very early the following morning I was awakened by the booming of guns, and the news followed. During the night in his private apartments and according to his religious rites the Raja had contracted a marriage with the balloonist's stepdaughter!

In an interview the same day I pointed out to him that he could hardly expect Government to approve; and his argument was that his marriage was his private affair and that in the case of another Chief, who had not long before married the daughter of his trainer ("Florence Maharāni"), nothing had happened beyond an expression of strong disapproval on the part of Lord Curzon. I am glad to say that, like "Florence Maharāni", the lady showed herself a most excellent consort. The Dutchman left the State with a "packet". Lord Curzon was very angry; but so far as I was concerned the Punjab Government took up the cudgels stout-heartedly. It was admitted (and I was quite ready to admit this myself) that my action had in all probability precipitated the marriage. But it was urged that I had passed on my information as soon as it reached me; that the Raja was after all a Ruling Chief, who might have married anyone, at any time, anywhere in the world. Further, that I could not possibly have spent each night in the private apart-

ments of the Chief in order to see what was happening! For all that, it was certainly a relief to my mind when some two years later Lord Curzon turned aside in a ballroom to shake my hand and say that he was pleased to see me back in Simla.

“Florence Maharāni” was a homely, gentle Irish-woman with none of the traditional Irish beauty. Her Maharāja was devoted to her; but I am afraid that many of his European visitors did not pay her that attention which was her due—for after all, she was their hostess. Often after dinner she would sit, neglected and lonely, in the drawing-room; but I like to think that one man at least behaved like the gentleman he was; my former brother-officer, the ‘Early-Wormlet’. When his visit came to an end, he had a letter from her thanking him for his courtesy and kindness.

When she lay dying (so one of her nurses told me) the great bed in which she lay was covered with jewellery, musical boxes, mechanical toys—with everything that a devoted husband could think of to distract her mind from her illness. And after her passing there was a sacrifice of white peacocks.

Things have changed; Indian princes have married Spaniards, Frenchwomen, Englishwomen. As regards such marriages the rule used to be that the lady was entitled to no official recognition, and that no child of such a marriage could lay claim to the Chieftainship of the State.

Whilst in the States I made notes of various interesting customs and superstitions.

It was lucky to include a Court dwarf in the *entourage*; and it was lucky to pass under an elephant. As regards the latter of these two superstitions it always seemed to me that one’s good fortune consisted

in the animal's not electing to lie down during the operation!

Again it was unlucky to thwart a *billa*. A *billa* is a person with cat's eyes; and it is probably not generally known that in India much of the late Lord Kitchener's power over men was popularly ascribed to the fact that he was a *billa*. There is one photograph of him which lends colour to this belief.

If the chief were ill, it was unlucky to offer one's condolences in the bald terms considered adequate in uncouth England. '*Sunagaya kih Huzur ka dushman bimār hogaya*' ('it has been heard that your Highness's enemy is ill') was the polite and lucky form of address. And did the chief condescend to yawn it was incumbent on all present to snap their fingers to prevent the devil from hopping down his throat.

In some of the Hill States round about Simla and the Tibet road an extraordinary superstition still exists concerned with the mysterious essence called *mōmeai*. The real *mōmeai* is supposed to drip from the roof of a cave in Persia. By some of the ignorant hillmen it is actually believed that the white man owes his superior stamina and intellect to *mōmeai* which he obtains by catching an unsuspecting hillman and hanging him head downwards over a fire. I have never been able to trace the origin of this superstition; but I must confess to entertaining grave doubts as to whether anything beneficial could possibly be distilled from the brain of the average hillman.

The employment of euphemisms was one of the marks of a true courtier. A chief's drinking-bout would be spoken of as 'The Raja's monsoon'. Incidentally, I knew of two chiefs who met together and indulged in a 'monsoon' which lasted for more than a week. Their beverage was the 'King's Peg', old brandy and champagne, with an occasional dash of green char-

treuse. At the end of it one of them, not unnaturally, expired.

A chief never 'died'—he 'ordained his transfer'. One ruler, indeed, objected so much to the mere mention of death that when any official chanced to die of cholera it was always reported that he had 'gone to the hills'.

In Hindu and Sikh States especially the taking of life, even in the cause of justice and even in the case of the lower animals, was viewed with particular repugnance. At the capital of one such State a plague of pariah dogs constantly developing hydrophobia became so bad that something had to be done to get rid of them. By order of the Chief they were trapped and were taken by train to a desert, where they were let loose. It is to be supposed that there, having nothing else to live on, they preyed upon each other, the last dog dying of remorse.

A similar arrangement was made for a pest of monkeys which looted the grain shops near a railway junction. By means of grain and sugar-cane they were lured into closed railway trucks and were removed. How the rumour started in the *bazārs* that they were to be made over to Government to fight the Afridis I cannot imagine.

*Durbārs*, with their imposing ceremonial, the chanting priests, the caterwauling nautch-girls, have been frequently described; but in my State there was one feature of the ceremonial *durbār* which always moved me to mirth. The father of my Chief had been greatly struck at some military parade by the appearance of a Highland regiment headed by its pipers. He accordingly instituted a pipe band of his own; and the spectacle of the musicians at his *durbārs* in full Highland costume, their dusky knees veiled by pink cotton tights, was amazing.

The *Zenāna* was forbidden ground except to the wives of European officials; but the visits of English ladies, especially if they possessed some knowledge of the vernacular, were welcomed. The first question put to them always concerned the number and sex of their children; and I recollect a lady telling me that whenever she paid a visit to a *Zenāna* she "invented six sons".

Sometimes her experiences were rather embarrassing, as on the occasion of a visit of condolence to a Rāni who had recently lost one of her children. The poor lady expressed a wish to show her visitor a photograph of the child; and to her visitor's astonishment produced an X-ray photograph of the child's abdomen taken during its last illness.

On another occasion, when visiting an elderly Begam troubled with rheumatism, my friend remarked on the number of medicine bottles, many of them still unopened, which were stacked upon a table in the apartment. She was informed that they contained all the known remedies for the complaint, but had been discarded in favour of a prescription of the local *hakīm* (sent into the *Zenāna* inscribed on a soiled piece of notepaper) who had recommended the employment of certain charms together with the application of raw venison to the knees.

'The old order changeth' apace in India; and the methods of the Indian States are altering side by side with those of British territory.

Progress is inevitable; but for most of us who have served during many years in the East there will always remain the fascination and the glamour of the older *régime*. The old type of Indian ruler is passing away.

For this modernisation of ancient manners and customs many influences are responsible; and amongst others are the greater facilities for visits to Europe, the increasing power of the Indian Press as a commentator

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upon State methods, and the working of agitators bent on disturbing what two of our own statesmen have described as 'the pathetic contentment of the masses'.

I count myself lucky in having passed my time in what was then an old-fashioned State; for it supplied me with much material for my novel—*The Devil's Finger*. It is true that the novel deals with a mythical Rajput State of four hundred years ago; but unless there happens to occur some sudden impetus forward, an old-fashioned State may remain unchanged for many hundreds of years.

## CHAPTER VIII

AFTER a brief spell of Settlement training and having spent more than nine years in India, I took eighteen months' furlough to England.

Soon after my arrival I became engaged, and was married the following year. I sometimes read of a man boasting that he has married the Perfect Wife. All such persons are mistaken: I married her.

In addition to the round of amusements which occupy the time of most men on furlough I found something to do which gave me entertainment, the job of paragraph-writer for the *Pink 'Un!*

Colonel Newnham Davies, the 'Dwarf of Blood', introduced me to 'The Master', old John Corlett; and at lunches at Romano's I met 'Nathaniel Gubbins', 'Pitcher' and others of the regular staff. The 'Shifter', I regret to say, had passed on; but one of his quips I shall cherish for ever. Being a Scot I can appreciate haggis; but after a St. Andrew's dinner the 'Shifter' gave in the next issue of the paper his idea of its recipe: "The stomach of a dog, mixed with the stomach of a cat, boiled in a bagpipe."

Having a son in the Indian Cavalry, John Corlett was particularly kind to all young fellows home from 'The Shiny', and I found myself commissioned to send in humorous paragraphs based on the news in the papers. One little joke over which he chuckled concerned the collapse of the Campanile:

"What's this 'ere Campernile, Bill?"

"'Ouse where the Pope lives."

"Garn! The Pope lives in the Vacuum!"

I received no regular salary; but every now and

then the 'Dwarf' would send along a fiver with: "Old John thinks this may be useful". After my return to India I continued to send paragraphs until I ran out of material and declined to take any more of old John's money. I was amused to learn several years later from his son that the old man had asked him whether he thought I would give up my Indian career and become assistant editor of the *Pink 'Un*!

At the end of my leave I found that I was to be posted to Lahore for two years' training as a District Judge. This was great good fortune; as my newly married wife would have a much better time in the Punjab capital than in some out-of-the-way station. On my arrival there I found that before taking over charge I was to accompany the Northern Force to the Delhi manœuvres, which were to precede Lord Curzon's great Durbār of 1903.

My duties were those of a political officer to settle any trouble which might take place on the road between the troops and villagers, to assess damage to crops and so forth. There was no trouble; and when we reached Delhi the authorities ruled that I might as well stay on and see the Durbār. So I was placed in charge of a Raja of one of the small Hill States near Simla.

He was a pleasant little man; and one of my perquisites was a ramshackle barouche supplied by him to enable me to attend functions. For these we had good seats; and when he and his suite were dressed in their ceremonial garb, they looked well. But when I took them of an afternoon to a polo match, they turned out (to my dismay) in very loud checks and 'gent's' boaters and resembled nothing so much as a troupe of Margate Christy minstrels.

I lived in great comfort in the camp of my cousin, General Sir Robert Low, who was then commanding

the troops in the Bombay Presidency. One day he took a party of us from his camp and gave us a most interesting account of what happened during the Mutiny, when he himself had been present during the siege of Delhi. His own regiment had mutinied early in the rising, and he was there as Orderly Officer to General Barnard. He (as Brigade-Major) and his brother-in-law, Sir Theophilus Metcalfe (as Civil Officer), afterwards accompanied the column which went to Agra. The great John Nicholson had a very high opinion of his abilities.

On another occasion he escorted a party of distinguished people from other camps, including the Duke of Portland, Lord Northcote and Lords Curzon and Kitchener; and thereby hangs a small tale. The next morning one of my cousins received a letter thanking her for the most efficient manner in which she had handed round the map which her father had been using to show the position of the different points of interest about which he had been speaking. The letter was signed: "Yrs ever, Kitchener"—and my cousin was very much excited about it until she discovered that it had been concocted by some of us younger folks in the camp.

The Durbār functions were full of splendour, and were marred only by one unpleasant incident. Not long before, a native cook had died as the result of a beating received close to the lines of the 9th Lancers. His assailants were never discovered; and according to many people's ideas the evidence was not strong enough to implicate men of that regiment. However, the leave of all officers of the regiment who happened to be in India was stopped for some months, and there were other regimental punishments. Strong feeling was aroused against Lord Curzon who, rightly or wrongly, was believed to be responsible for this.

There was a big parade during the Durbār festivities; and the regiment rode by amid a perfect storm of cheering. This was understandable so far as the ordinary European spectators were concerned; but the loudest cheers came from the Viceroy's own guests! This, surely, was an exhibition of the grossest bad taste: they at least should have remained silent.

It was a relief to some of us when a fresh burst of cheering welcomed the aged Raja of Nabha, a splendid old Sikh chief with a long white beard who had insisted on riding at the head of his troops.

One of the features of the Durbār was Lady Curzon's wonderful Peacock robe, now in the London Museum at Kensington Palace.

Though my camping had come to an end and my work was done entirely in a court, I found a District Judge's work most interesting; and daily contact with the best brains of the Lahore Bar taught me much of law.

There were also good polo, dinner parties and dances; and I blush to remember that at a concert given by Madame Alice Gomez I had the colossal impertinence to contribute an item: '*Dio dell' or*' from *Faust*. The diva must have been astonished!

Towards the end of my second year I was struck down with pneumonia; a bad business, for I had to use up six weeks of precious privilege leave or go on half pay. After my recovery the Accountant-General added insult to injury by inserting the prescribed formula in the official Gazette: "Captain Irvine, having enjoyed six weeks' privilege leave, returned to duty on the . . ." etc. During my convalescence I read all the works of Richard Marsh, and was cheered by a remark in an old medical book which ran: "In this disease alcohol is well borne".

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The departure of the night nurse coincided with the advent of a burglar; and it was the only occasion on which I have felt grateful to the Indian white ant, which devours your boots and your books and everything that is yours. Under the window of the room in which my wife was asleep had been placed a large wooden box set upon four bricks to keep off the white ants. One of the bricks had come adrift; and stepping upon the box the burglar was tilted sprawling into the middle of the room. This so scared him that he shot out through the window.

My illness had this good result that, the District Judgeship of Simla happening to fall vacant, I was appointed to that post for two years. On leaving Lahore I was proud to become one of the four D.J.'s to whom the Bar had given a special farewell address; as proud as when two years later the Simla Bar, revising an old legal practice, presented me by way of a memento with a pair of white gloves.

I found Simla under snow with skating going on on flooded tennis-courts; and my wife and sister (who was living with us) coming up a few weeks later arrived just in time for a horrible experience—the earthquake of April, 1905.

The hill station of Dharmshala was completely wrecked; many men of the Gurkha regiment and many civilians losing their lives. In Simla there was no loss of life, but much damage was done. Lady Curzon had a narrow escape, part of a tower of Vice-regal Lodge crashing through the roof and coming to rest on the floor above her bedroom.

Our little bungalow was on the slopes of Jakko hill, and we were awakened at a very early hour by the rattling and shaking of the corrugated iron roof. Like most of the Simla bungalows it was built of lath and plaster; and having a certain amount of

elasticity, unlike the stone-built bungalows of Dharm-sala, it was saved from complete collapse.

We imagined for a moment that the Jakko monkeys were jumping about on the roof; but when the house began to shake and rock sickeningly we knew it must be an earthquake. A large portion of the back wall of the house fell outwards; and masses of plaster began to fall from the walls of the bedrooms on the upper storey. Realising that it would be very cold in the garden and thinking that my wife was safely downstairs, I was grabbing up rugs and blankets to give us covering. The dressing-room wall began to collapse and out of the débris emerged my wife rescuing the parrot! I had then to rout out my sister who, under the impression that the end of the world had come, had decided to stay in bed clasping a pug dog.

A most astounding thing was the imperturbability of our Indian servants, Mohammedans whose watch-word was '*Kismet*'. They brought us tea in the garden, and our old cook commenced to prepare breakfast. Now and again there would come another tremor, and he would sally from his cook-house which was split in half, and when the tremor had ceased would return to his cooking. The first creature out of the house, by the way, was our beautiful cat (buried when almost twenty years of age in the lovely Residency garden in Kashmir). He disappeared for three days and lived, apparently, in someone else's coal-hole.

I did not enjoy sitting in court that day, since someone had foretold a 'return shock' at noon. There was no sign of any litigant; and my Reader and I sat on in solemn silence in a big stone-built building. Gradually he began to turn green; and I dare say that I did also; but seeing that he in his non-secular moments was the Imām of a Simla mosque, I had

the consolation of knowing that I was to some extent under priestly protection!

No return shock came; but for weeks afterwards there were occasional and most unpleasant tremors. One might spend a peaceful night in bed; or one might be dashing out at intervals into the garden. One never knew.

In a place where no one has been killed or injured there can be humour connected even with an earthquake; and people laughed over the story of the Indian *babu* who wired to a friend in the plains: "*Here earth is quack. How there?*"

In the Grand Hotel there was living the wife of a General; and when the floor collapsed she slid down the slope in her bed to the floor below; but I doubt the story that as she slid past the native postman handed her her letters.

For some time after the earthquake many people preferred to sleep out of doors, and thereby hangs a tale. The Chief Medical Officer and his lady slept in a tent pitched on their tennis court. One night a man climbing up the hill path to the Club quarters noticed squatting on the branch of a tree which overhung the tent a large monkey. Naturally he flung a stone at it, and the monkey sprang gibbering from its perch on to the top of the tent setting the whole erection quivering. From inside the tent came the agonised cry of the lady: "My God, Tom! This is the end!"

Towns in the plains did not suffer much, though part of the railway station in Lahore was damaged. In connection with this I recall one amusing episode. The wife of a high official, patroness of several girls' schools, was driving to the station to meet her son who was arriving by the Bombay mail. As she passed along the station road, to her intense indignation she

saw the pupils of every school out upon the lawns with practically 'nodings on'! Driving in a carriage she had not felt the earthquake.

It was about this earthquake that the fine old Chief of Nabha explained to me his theory. What remained of my small drawing-room was converted into a *durbār*-hall; and he and I sat in the middle of a semi-circle of his nobles. His gem-incrusted, crimson-scabbarded sword across his knees, he held forth in *Punjābi* which became more and more difficult to understand. In the olden times, he told us, the princes used to war among themselves and to reduce the surplus population. Whereas now, by reason of the *Pax Brittanica*, there was no more fighting; and the earth groaned and heaved under the weight of the human beings upon its surface.

When handing over charge my predecessor had warned me to be on the watch for a certain lady, whose chief delight was litigation. In due course she appeared in a right-of-way case, which I decided against her. To relieve her feelings she wrote a letter to a Member of Parliament, a Mr. Weir, well known for his habit of asking questions in the House about every conceivable subject. She wrote that the Secretary of State for India might be interested to learn that the District Judge of Simla was a person holding the military rank of captain, who sometimes played the buffoon at the local theatre!

Mr. Weir duly put his question, and Mr. St. John Brodrick replied that there was nothing unusual about a Punjab military-civilian's holding such a post and that he could see no reason to interfere with the amusements of officials, provided they did their work. But since the matter had been reported in the papers, a minute on the subject had to be submitted to the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab. The L.G. read the

minute through, and then wrote upon it the late Sir Wilfrid Lawson's rhyme:

"The weary Weir  
With query queer  
The Question Paper crams.  
It is not clear  
Why one small weir  
Should cause so many dam(n)s."

Incidentally, I received a splendid 'chit' from my friends of the Simla Bar, who sent a letter to the Secretary of State to the effect that I was the epitome of all judicial virtues.

The 'buffoon' reference concerned my appearance as the 'Pirate King' in the Gilbert and Sullivan opera.

Lord Kitchener, whose recreations were the collecting of china, gardening and reading detective stories, did much entertaining at Snowdon. I remember my last dinner-party there, because I left behind me my beloved old hat which I always used for rickshaw journeys by night during the Rains. Naturally I made no inquiry about it, but it came back after a few days with a note from an A.D.C.: "From the initials in this old wreck the Chief thinks that it must belong either to you or to Ali Imam!" Sir Ali Imam was a prominent member of the Government, and was always impeccably dressed!

The great 'K' once did us the honour of playing on our pianola. We had acquired one of these (at that time) new-fangled toys, and when he dined with the Lieutenant-Governor at Barnes Court Lady Dane borrowed it for his amusement. After my wife had shown him how it worked, he insisted on playing some tunes himself, though hampered by his broken leg. His leg had been broken by a fall from his horse

in the Mashobra tunnel, and he had lain there quite a long time without assistance, passing hill-coolies having fled in terror from an angry and injured 'Jangi Lāt-Sahib' (War Lord) propped against the wall.

'K' was so pleased with his musical performance that, when my wife dined at Snowdon soon afterwards, he took her on a special tour of his library, showing her his latest acquisition, an old stone mantelpiece engraved with the words: 'Read—Mark—Learn'—and he approved of her comment that there ought to be another in the dining-room engraved: 'And inwardly digest.'

One of the chief social events of Lord Curzon's last season was the Historical Ball given by Their Excellencies. Lady Curzon was magnificently beautiful as Berengaria of Navarre in a wonderful dress of woven gold.

My wife and I were in a Louis XVI. group. She represented Countess La Motte, and I endeavoured to resemble Cagliostro. Our group received a charming letter from Lady Curzon. One of the dresses worn by a lady was genuinely historic. It had belonged to the favourite wife of an old King of Delhi; and had come into her father's possession after the siege along with the King's crown. The crown he had given to Queen Victoria; and it is now in the Tower.

In respect of some of the dresses my wife was able to exercise her great talent. She was for five years Mistress of the Robes to the Simla Amateur Dramatic Society; and a handsome silver salver from the Committee bears testimony to her skill.

But the Ball of balls was that given by the Punjab to their Royal Highnesses the Prince (afterwards King George V.) and Princess of Wales, when they paid a visit to India at the end of 1905.

For this I was placed in charge of the arrangements, being ostensibly employed on special duty writing the annual Punjab Administration Report.

The ball, which was a great success, took place on St. Andrew's Day in the big Montgomery Hall at Lahore; and my wife was responsible for the whole scheme of decoration including that of the Prince's private supper-room. As a memento we own a fine silver bowl, bearing the Prince of Wales's feathers and the Punjab crest of 'The Five Rivers'.

Among the Prince's staff I had the pleasure of meeting again Sir Walter Lawrence, General Sir Stuart Beatson and the present Lord Wigram. I am reminded that at the ball the Princess wore "rose-coloured chiffon velours" with magnificent jewels. Special hand-painted menus for the supper-room representing Indian scenes were designed by my Gunner friend, Colonel Hobday.

As their Royal Highnesses wished for a quadrille, I had to acquire knowledge of this (to me) unknown terpsichorean exercise and then assist a number of high personages to stagger through it at rehearsals. For the part of the Prince I cast, much to his disgust, a young sprig of the nobility who a few months before had annoyed me in Simla by marching into my court with a cigar and a bull-dog.

The catering was in the most capable hands of Mr. Faletti, and he had to keep a most watchful eye upon his Indian subordinates; for to avoid the risk of enteric every article of crockery and cutlery used by the Prince had to be washed in distilled water.

I, too, had my anxious moments. There was to have been a procession headed by the trumpeters of a famous regiment of British Cavalry. At eleven o'clock the night before, General Beatson told me that the

idea had been abandoned; and I had to placate the regiment by stationing the trumpeters round the ballroom. Then there were the precedence lists for the private supper-room. After I had made and sent them out, a message would suddenly reach me from a lady to the effect that on account of a headache she would not be present. This meant the making out and despatching of fresh lists.

Again, on the lists had been printed a notice requesting those concerned to be handy to the dais at the time fixed for supper. When the time drew near I found a high dignitary hopping about in a state bordering on frenzy: the lady of lofty degree whom he was to escort was nowhere to be seen. I found her calmly seated in the general supper marquee enjoying a meal with a boy friend! I am afraid I was rather short with her as I broke up her *tête-à-tête*; but since she smiled very charmingly, I suppose she understood and forgave me.

On the morning after the ball I was superintending dismantlement, when a message came that their Royal Highnesses wished to see me; and hastily I exchanged an old flannel suit for 'glad rags'. They were both most gracious and gave me their signed photographs, the Prince inquiring at what hour I had left the ball. He seemed much amused when I said: "Six-thirty, sir." He thought, no doubt, that I had spent the time in revelry; but as a matter of fact I had had to superintend the packing of the Mess plate lent for his supper-room, and was besides responsible for two thousand pounds' worth of tents wired temporarily for electricity.

After all was over there came the somewhat difficult task of collecting outstanding subscriptions. One of the last of the subscribers eventually paid up by a money-order from Greece.

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This story is inserted because it amuses me and also because it illustrates how a young woman with a strong will and considerable cheek can cope with an emergency.

Instead of waiting for the before-mentioned festivities, my sister departed on a visit to our brother in Capetown. With her she took a pug dog which had been left in her care by a friend who had gone to England. From Bombay came a wire saying that Puggie was not well, and that I should send the 'Sweeper' to fetch him.

My servant was despatched; and immediately afterwards came a letter from the dog's owner, who had returned unexpectedly from England. She was very angry when I wrote that the dog had started on a cruise to the Cape. After a few days my 'Sweeper' came back and announced with a grin that the Miss Sahiba had changed her mind and had sailed taking the animal with her.

The sea air did not benefit Puggie; and an astonished General Officer Commanding at Aden received a visit from a total stranger requesting him to arrange to send the dog back to Bombay. According to my sister, he was "a very nice old man"; and an A.D.C. put the dog on board a vessel while she continued her journey.

She had wired to a cousin, who was married to the Commissioner of the Bombay Police; and when the vessel cast anchor a police launch chugged out from the quay. The passengers, watching to see who might be the distinguished personage allowed to land before the rest of them, saw a small pug dog passed over the side, and the launch chugged back again.

From Bombay I received a wire from my cousin demanding the instant services of my 'Sweeper', followed by a letter of abuse about the trouble to

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which she had been put when her husband was down with enteric! In due course my menial restored Puggie to his owner in Meerut; where, being covered with lumps, the creature soon afterwards expired.

That 'cold weather' I spent in Amritsar learning the responsible work of a Sessions Judge and returning to Simla for the summer season. Amritsar was a place of which I was destined to hear much more in connection with General Dyer and the Punjab troubles of 1919.

After having been District Judge of Lahore my work at Simla was easy; consisting for the most part of shopkeepers' disputes and petty cases of assault. A case in which a Eurasian lady was alleged to have stabbed her husband with a bread-knife came to nothing; for the husband swore that he had suddenly opened the door and had fallen against the bread-knife by accident.

There was a clever robbery from the Government Treasury. There were double doors of iron bars and double locks; yet, at the far end of a stone vault rupee-bags of stout coir-mesh had been cut open and their contents abstracted, the locks remaining intact. The robbery was traced to the constable on night duty who had affixed to the end of a long pole a razor covered with bird-lime. This during the night-watches he had poked through the bars; and sawing open the sacks had dipped out rupees as from a lucky bag.

In civil suits complications occasionally arose from the fact that in those hill-tracts a woman was frequently shared between several husbands; and one of my failures was to effect services of summonses on a lady who had taken up her residence in Kashmir, outside British territory. She owed much money to the Simla tradespeople; but the summonses were always being returned unserved with the report that she had

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chased the process-server away from her bungalow with a horse-whip.

Lord Minto had succeeded Lord Curzon as Viceroy; and with the Mintos came a boom in theatricals, for one of the daughters, Lady Eileen Elliot, was an exceptionally fine amateur actress. I joined the theatrical Committee, and our job was not always an easy one. After his wife's failure at a 'voice audition', one indignant husband perambulated Simla telling everyone that his wife could sing "the whole of 'Faust'." Well, I suppose it would be possible to sing the whole of 'Faust' out of tune. Soon after Lord Minto assumed the Viceroyalty a good story about him was going the rounds. There appeared one day upon his office table a portentous file, sent up by one of the Secretariats, dealing with some involved question concerned with a Native State. Lord Curzon, no doubt, would have enjoyed ploughing through the acres of verbiage, and would then have written a masterly minute on the subject. But Lord Minto's soldierly mind required something more concise and more easily understandable—in fact, a précis. Though he worked as hard as any Viceroy at the myriad questions which came before him, he had a rooted distaste for doing what was really babu's work; so he dealt summarily with the matter. Taking a blue pencil he inscribed upon the margin of the file: "Here's a hell of a nut for somebody"—and sent it back again to the Secretariat.

## CHAPTER IX

DURING 1907, when I was once again for some months Sessions Judge of Amritsar, a wave of unrest began to creep over India.

Trouble in the Punjab was mainly fomented by two notorious agitators, Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh. Sir Denzil Ibbetson, a strong Lieutenant-Governor, took vigorous action against them, and Lajpat Rai was deported to Mandalay. One of their endeavours had been to stir up the Sikh peasantry, using as a pretext a measure known as the Colony Bill.

Though the unrest went on throughout the following year it was not long before Lajpat Rai was released. This was possibly done to please the then Secretary of State, Lord Morley. Lord Minto has recorded that he looked upon him as "ultra-sensitive"; and it was well known how much he disliked repressive measures, how contemptuously he would write to a Viceroy who was doing his best about the 'fooleries of your law-and-order people', and how he was sometimes worrying himself about what the *Spectator* would say! Lord Morley had no first-hand knowledge of India; and one feels that the Viceroy was justified when he wrote in one of his letters:

"Government by the strong hand is what appeals to the majority of the different populations of this country."

And again:

"The modern House of Commons is absolutely incapable of understanding Indian humanity."

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As might have been anticipated, Lajpat Rai as soon as he was released recommenced his seditious activities, associating himself with Har Dayal, the famous revolutionary who was the mainspring of the *Ghadr* conspiracy of 1915, which I shall discuss in detail later on. He was also associated with that most seditious newspaper called the *Bande Mataram*.

For one thing we must thank Lord Morley; his remark to Lady Minto that he looked upon Sir Michael O'Dwyer as 'the coming man'. Those of us who were privileged to serve under that great ruler of the Punjab during the troublous times of 1915 and 1919 can realise the justice of that remark.

Amritsar, which may be called the headquarters of the Sikhs, did not escape these murmurings; and while I was there a meeting was called by certain members of the European community to assemble at the Club and consider what should be done in the event of an outbreak. I declined to attend this meeting: partly because I did not believe that there would be serious trouble, and partly because I had a rooted objection to scaremongering.

There was a good deal of that. A story went round of drums beaten in the dead of night, of shadowy figures stealing along the darkened roads armed with sticks. On inquiry they were found to have been a party of guests returning home from a native wedding in the city. Yet I can hardly blame the scaremongers: after all, they and their wives and families would have to go on living in the place; whereas my wife had preceded me to England and I myself was due for furlough. What appalling things can happen when fanatical Indian mobs get out of hand we were most of us to know only too well some twelve years later.

Towards the end of that year India received a visit

from a Socialist Member of Parliament, the late Mr. Keir Hardie; and his advent did not lighten the burden of the Government of India. One of the curses of India has always been the travelling ' Pagett M.P.', and Keir Hardie proved to be no exception. Lord Morley wrote about his ' nonsense ' and ' plausible claptrap ', while the Viceroy reckoned him a ' warm-hearted enthusiast, but entirely wrong-headed '. What they feared was not his influence with his small following in England; but his effect on Congress agitators who, deluded by his speeches and antics, would get the idea that behind him there was a large body of representative British opinion.

Congress leaders were quite ready to make use of him; and agitators united to fool him to the top of his bent. At the same time most snobbishly they despised him for having risen from the ranks, referring to him as ' the coolie-Sahib ' ; and he did not even impress them when he took to going about with bare feet shod with sandals.

In Bengal they even staged for his benefit a bogus famine! There was no famine, but it was a simple matter to quarter in a village a number of skinny fakirs and professional starvelings to sit about looking miserable and hungry. After he had made some horrified notes, he was taken by a round-about course to another village, while the starvelings were rushed across country to enact there the same rôle.

The result of his observations made good lecturing matter on his return to England. He had been "shocked" to see how many Indian children went barefoot, ignoring the fact that a great proportion of the inhabitants of India go barefoot by choice and that for centuries their ancestors had done so. Again, he had been shocked to find that in some parts of India the daily food of the poor was a "few handfuls

of birds' seed!" He was, presumably, ignorant that in those parts the staple food was millet; and had probably never read Kipling's story—' William the Conqueror '—relating how the famine-stricken of the Madras side would die within reach of good grain because the unhusked rice to which they were accustomed was unobtainable.

As long ago as 1879 Aberigh Mackay described ' Pagett M.P.' as a "most fearful wildfowl" intent upon writing a book entitled ' Is India Worth Keeping? '

During this period of alarums and excursions a touch of comedy was supplied by the visit to India of a thick-set, cheery, bellowing individual who was the Amir of Afghanistan. He arrived during the ' cold weather ', and enjoyed himself so much that Government found it difficult to induce him to return to his mountain fastnesses. Several amusing passages about him will be found in Lady Minto's book—*India, Minto and Morley*.

He paid us a visit in the Punjab; and while at Lahore took a great fancy to a certain lady to whom he presented a fine pearl necklace. She was foolish enough to accept it, and it was afterwards returned by her husband; but the episode furnished another lady, her bitter enemy, with a chance for revenge.

There happened to take place a gymkhana, one of the events being ' The Limerick Stakes ' in which each lady with her partner had to ride to a post, compose a Limerick of which the first line was given and ride back again. The line given was:

' *A potentate called the Amir*, ' and the winning verse ran as follows:

' A potentate called the Amir  
Remarked with an amorous leer,

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“Though not in my harem,  
Please take 'em and wear 'em,  
And think of me sometimes, my dear!”'

When I again found myself on leave in England I had a brainwave. My judicial work had begun to interest me immensely; so I asked for an interview with the late Lord Alverstone, who was Lord Chief Justice of England. He had been a friend of my father; and he gave me his card admitting me to any Court I might wish to visit.

I attended all sorts of trials making notes and watching the procedure of judges and counsel. One of the most interesting of the criminal cases was that at the Old Bailey tried by the late Lord Darling, when 'Chicago May' and a young crook named Charlie Smith were tried for the attempted murder of Eddie Guerin, known as the 'Devil's Island' prisoner.

Guerin had some time previously been concerned in a big robbery on the premises of the American Express Company in Paris. For this he had been sentenced by a French court to transportation for life; and had been sent to the Ile du Diable in French Guiana, where Dreyfus had served his sentence. Guerin's associate, 'Chicago May', had been sentenced to five years' imprisonment.

Guerin with two other men managed to escape. Fantastic stories were put about to the effect that when food ran short he had killed and eaten his companions. In the course of the trial which I witnessed he was asked by counsel whether he had killed them; but he would only answer with a grin: "Well, some people say so!"

Guerin got back to England and associated again with 'Chicago May'. There was a quarrel, and she betrayed him to Scotland Yard. A trial took place

before Lord Alverstone, Mr. Justice Darling, and a third judge; and their decision was that as Guerin was a British-born subject living on British soil he could not be extradited to the French authorities.

‘Chicago May’ then allied herself with young Charlie Smith, who had been deported from South Africa. Thirsting for revenge, she and Smith followed Guerin one night through the purlieus of Soho; and outside Russell Square Tube Station Smith fired several shots from a revolver wounding Guerin in the foot, while, ‘Chicago May’ urged him on from a doorway.

There is, I suppose, honour among thieves; and what impressed me much throughout the trial of the precious pair for attempted murder was Guerin’s constant protestations that he was only giving evidence against them because he was obliged to; not because he cherished any ill-will about the attempt to murder him. In the end ‘Chicago May’ was sentenced to fifteen years’ imprisonment: she gave a sickly smile and was carried out swooning. Smith was sentenced to penal servitude for life, and there followed a scene which I shall never forget; the snarling, vicious face of the young crook protruded over the dock yelling a mixture of unprintable filth and blasphemy at the impassive figure of the judge in his robes of scarlet and ermine.

When on leave I usually contrived to do myself some damage; once high-diving into a bath filled with an inadequate supply of water and on this occasion when practising jiu-jitsu. Struggling with a Jap I badly displaced a knee-cartilage. Having read about Sir Herbert Barker in a newspaper, I went straight to him. Poor old Dr. Axham, labelled as “infamous” by the General Medical Council, gave me a whiff of something, the cartilage was replaced, and has never

since moved. The after-treatment prescribed was a walk all over London the same afternoon and the purchase of sixpennyworth of methylated spirits for rubbing purposes.

Thus commenced a friendship of thirty years with the great manipulative surgeon and his charming lady. I am glad to think that in those days I was of service to him in England and in India in his war with the orthodox practitioners—now happily at an end. I know of his generosity to sufferers who cannot afford big fees; and he is quite as crazy about sun-bathing as I am. When we sun-bathe together at Alassio, he is an adept at standing on his head.

Another interesting person whose acquaintance I made was the late Marie Corelli. My friends the Bairnsfathers took me to tea with her. She was most pleasant; and not one word did she say about her books. But when I was leaving her companion beckoned me aside into a small room, and in a voice hushed with reverence bade me look at the rows of bound manuscript volumes.

During the summer we stayed for a while in the Isle of Wight, and there I met the world's champion prevaricatrix.

Those being opulent Indian days, I had treated myself to some suits of blue silk pyjamas. A pair was returned from the wash transformed into an outfit suitable for an organ-grinder's monkey. My wife complained to the laundry, and the Manageress appeared. She stoutly declined to admit that any shrinking had taken place. To convince her my wife placed an unworn suit alongside the monkey suit.

Even then she would admit no fault; but pointing to the unworn suit of pyjamas delivered herself of this priceless criticism:

“Those are a very large size!”

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In the autumn I returned to India to become District and Sessions Judge of Lahore, a post which I held for several years.

The perfect District and Sessions Judge would possess in a superhuman degree the special qualities of Solomon, Gallio, Job and a Bond Street crystal gazer. Equipped with these attributes he might hope in time to explore successfully the tortuous windings of the mind of the Indian witness. Those of us who unfortunately did not possess the mental gifts above enumerated did the best we could, relying chiefly upon our experience of many years and to a lesser extent upon observation of the witnesses' great toes. It is the custom of the country that shoes be left outside in the court verandah; and when the professional Oriental deponent (sometimes called 'the four-anna' witness) is embarrassed, he has a praiseworthy habit of twiddling the aforesaid tell-tale appendages, thereby furnishing some indication of the value of his testimony.

The District and Sessions Judge is the principal judicial officer in his division, which may comprise an area of some thousands of square miles with a population of a million inhabitants. His work consists for the most part in hearing appeals, criminal and civil; but he has also to dispose of divorce suits between Europeans and to deal with much miscellaneous matter concerned with probate, lunacy, guardians and wards, and insolvency. If he be a Punjab judge he must possess a colloquial knowledge of Urdu and Punjabi sufficient for the proper trial of persons accused of certain serious offences. Murder cases he decides with the assistance of three Indian Assessors. Death sentences passed by him and decrees in divorce suits require confirmation by judges of a High Court.

In estimating the perplexities which beset the task

of a judge in India it must be borne in mind that a vast majority of the population still live back in the Middle Ages. One of the chief difficulties with which he is confronted is the monumental ignorance of the average litigant. This is especially noticeable in the case of the Indian female witness, rich or poor. Inquiries as to her age, the time at which something happened, or the distance of one village from another, will often merely elicit the reply: "*Zanānian kī patta?*" ("What do women know of such matters?") It must, however, be granted that there has been some slight improvement in recent years. There are nowadays fewer misunderstandings arising from ignorance such as that of the old Jat cultivator, whose grievance before a higher court was that a judge instead of listening to his pleader's argument had spent his time "playing a musical instrument". That was in the early days of the typewriting machines!

The Punjabi peasant is by nature intensely litigious. However poor he may be he can always find the money for a lawsuit; and he prefers one of the "*Jarndyce v. Jarndyce*" variety that he can pass on to his son and his grandson. He will quarrel for years over an infinitesimal scrap of land; over the exact position of a doorstep; over a new window opened by a neighbour interfering (so he alleges) with the purdah of his womenfolk. Attempts at arbitration almost invariably end in accusations of bias and bribery against the arbitrators.

I have sometimes been asked whether Indians make good judicial officers; and my answer is that many of them have a natural aptitude for such work. As regards questions concerned with Hindu and Mohammedan law they are, naturally, very much on their own ground; they are painstaking and they often have keen brains.

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Two main difficulties beset them which are negligible in the case of the European. It is very difficult for an Indian judge to keep his mind free from bias in a matter affecting his co-religionists; and there is the stumbling-block of nepotism in respect of the office staff. I remember well an old judge of a High Court, very learned and very upright. He was a courtly, cultured gentleman; a pious, old-fashioned Hindu who in spite of his exalted rank would eat his meals in solitude and stripped bare except for his loin-cloth. After his retirement he frankly admitted that when the clerical department of the High Court had been under his control, he had placed in the minor posts many of his relations. Had he not done this, he explained, his private life would have been unbearable, and his work would in consequence have suffered. Day after day abusive letters would have reached him; and when he walked home to his house in Lahore city small boys would have been set to hoot after him in the streets that he, a man with a fat salary, was paying no heed to the needs of his poorer relatives!

Government's policy has always most wisely been to interfere as little as possible with the religious customs of the people; but certain practices obviously could not be tolerated. There is nowadays much less infanticide, and *suttee*—the burning alive of widows—which continued in certain of the Indian States until about 1877, has been made a penal offence. For all that one or two cases of *suttee* occur every year; and a friend of mine in Cawnpore was put to much trouble when the widow of one of his grooms drenched herself with paraffin and was burnt to death in the shrubbery at the end of his garden.

Thuggee—robbery of wayfarers carried out by organised bands of professional stranglers—has been

put down, although the assassins cloaked their villainy with the garb of religion. The practice of 'sitting *dharna*' is also now an offence. I only once saw this practice in operation, and that was in an Indian State. Outside the doorway of his enemy a man with a grievance was sitting; and there unless his grievance were removed he proposed to sit without food or water until he died—thereby bringing a curse upon his enemy's household. In certain parts of India there used to be a practice even more terrible—*traga*, self-immolation. A man would deliberately set himself on fire, and die dancing in agony in front of the wrong-doer's abode. In a country where custom is so much intermingled with religion it must always remain a problem as to what extent Government should interfere.

Another problem confronting Government is how best to deal with the Criminal Tribes, whose members number probably a million scattered all over the land. They are hereditary thieves and furnish their quota of cases in the courts. Some of them may be descended from the aboriginal owners of the soil; others came into India in the wake of conquering armies. Much interesting information about them will be found in a book written by my friend, Lieutenant-General Sir George MacMunn—*The Underworld of India*.

Educated Indians take but little trouble about them. They are largely 'Untouchables', wanderers, *khana-badoshis*—people with "their houses upon their backs". Sir Michael O'Dwyer, when Lieutenant-Governor, did much to settle them on the land; and splendid work has been done for them by the Belgian Franciscan Brothers and the Salvation Army. The latter body has, I believe, some forty settlements about the country.

Though the Indian Police are not under his control, a Sessions Judge sees much of their work; and I would

here say a word on behalf of that much-maligned corps. It is an old joke against the Indian policeman that his ' pay is the butter he eats with his bread'; and there are no doubt grounds for accusations of venality.

But I look upon them as a body of hard-working and under-paid men, who have their own methods of investigating crime but who in troublous times have been wonderfully loyal to their salt. In the enormous mass of evidence produced before my tribunal during the Lahore Conspiracy Trials—at a time when every policeman went in imminent danger of death—we found only one instance of a policeman thinking of throwing in his lot with the conspirators; and he went no further than saying that he would sit on the fence and see whether it would be worth his while.

Against the Indian policeman a favourite allegation is that of *chalāki*, craftiness; and occasionally such allegations are not without reason. Here is an instance of it.

A murderer was hanged in gaol, and his body was made over for burial to his relations who removed it on a bullock-cart. By some mischance at the time of execution too long a ' drop ' had been allowed, with the result that the head had been almost severed from the trunk. The jolting of the bullock-cart over the rough country roads during the night completed the severance, and the head of the corpse rolled into a ditch. There it was found next morning by a constable who argued that, as there was a head, there must have been a murder—and that there might be a chance of promotion for himself. A visit to a neighbouring village produced a *lambardar* (or headman) with the inevitable enemy; and the opportunity for revenge seemed too good a one to lose. So it was not long before the enemy found himself the chief actor in a

fully-fledged murder case, with much circumstantial evidence against him supported by the statements of the constable, the headman and other witnesses. It was in fact only certain medical evidence that saved him.

A difficulty often experienced in village murder cases is the banding together of the villagers to defeat justice and preserve the man-strength of the village. The argument is that by reason of the murder the village has lost one man: if the murderer be hanged it will have lost two! Again, I have known more than one murderer ready to implicate his own brother in order to save his own skin. A Pathan will never do this, though he will slay more often than men of other classes simply from motives of revenge. When revenge is the motive the Indian murderer seems to be wholly without bowels of compassion; and I remember an exasperated Sessions Judge remarking: "If I ever write an Indian novel it will begin like this:

"It was the hot, still Indian night. Outside the mud walls of the little village a young man was murdering his mother in order to get his brother hanged."

Many of the appeals which come before a District and Sessions Judge are from the decisions of Honorary Civil Judges and Magistrates.

These gentlemen—who are usually wealthy land-owners and persons of influence in their part of the country—do a great deal of very useful work; but their judgments are occasionally peculiar. I can only recollect one example in which an Honorary Civil Judge, having to decide which of two parties was the owner of a certain piece of land, decided that it *belonged to himself*; but the case was probably not unique.

The judgment of one Honorary Magistrate is

deserving of quotation *in extenso*. Two men, named respectively Rooldoo and Gamoo, each supported by an equal number of witnesses, filed cross-complaints of assault against each other in the Court of the local Honorary Magistrate. After a protracted trial in which both sides were given a patient hearing, the following judgment was delivered:

‘I can’t make out who is the real offender. It may be Rooldoo or it may be Gamoo. When Rooldoo tells his story I feel convinced that Gamoo is the offender. When Gamoo ends his story I almost jump to the conclusion that Rooldoo is the offender. When both tell their stories in the same breath—as I have often made them do, not knowing what else to do myself—confusion is worse confounded. I can’t say who is who; that is, whether Rooldoo is Gamoo, or Gamoo is Rooldoo. I have heard the story of each of these rascals from beginning to end, and *vice versa*. I frankly confess—nay, I boldly assert that I can’t make out head or tail of it all. I am quite sure that one of them is the offender. I hold that one of them, viz. either Rooldoo or Gamoo, should be taken to task; that is, let off with a sound warning, considering that it is the first time they have taken a fancy to putting me to unnecessary trouble. But I should be strictly impartial, in so far as I do not yet know who is the real offender. So I find both the rascals guilty under Section . . . of the Indian Penal Code. I feel sure that both are scoundrels of the most confounded type, but in honour of their first visit to this court I propose to let them off with a warning, and accordingly order Lakkhoo Chaprasi and Zaman Daftri to catch Rooldoo and Gamoo by the nose and lead them out of the Court.’

## CHAPTER X

EVERY year curious cases are tried in the courts of India; and murder cases are numerous. One month there were nine murder cases on my list; but in some of them the accused were confessing their guilt. I used to keep notes about some of my own cases, and about others which struck me as being interesting.

One of my murder cases exemplifies the difficulty which a murderer sometimes finds in successfully killing his victim. There was living in Muzang, a village on the outskirts of Lahore, a Mohammedan tonga-driver. His brother who dwelt in a house in Lahore city some two miles distant was in spite of the injunctions of the Prophet against strong drink a drunkard; and had the misfortune to come into some money.

One evening the tonga-driver paid his brother a visit, and having filled him full of liquor treated him to a sumptuous meal which he doped with a plentiful supply of arsenic. He then went home.

About midnight he was awakened by a voice bawling curses at him; and found that his brother though deadly ill had managed to struggle up from the city to revile his destroyer. The village post-office happened to be next door; and the postal *babu* hung out of the window to ask what all the noise was about. To this the tonga-driver replied that it was only his drunken brother from the city.

After a time the wretched victim became comatose; and the murderer and a confederate placed him on the back of a tonga and drove him several miles to the Ravi river, intending to push him in and drown him.

But out of the darkness a wandering fakir suddenly appeared upon the river-bank; so after making some feeble excuse about cooling a fevered drunkard's brow, they were forced to drive home again. There they finished the matter by battering the poor wretch about the head with a wheel-spoke.

Suspicion was aroused when, in place of the usual notice about the funeral ceremonies, the body was hastily bestowed in its *kafan*, the Mohammedan winding-sheet—whence our word ‘coffin’—and was buried without ceremony. The postal *babu* and the fakir were valuable witnesses; a post-mortem examination revealed the presence of arsenic and the head injuries; and the murderer met with his deserts.

One of the strangest witnesses who appeared before me in a murder case was a man who was deaf and dumb. He had been an actual eye-witness of the murder, which had taken place during a starlit night in a village; and in the circumstances the murderer had thought himself safe. But the witness proved to be an admirable actor, and we watched him with a thrill creeping towards a bedstead on which lay a sleeping man and stabbing several times downwards with an imaginary dagger.

In Amritsar there was a curious case, which did not constitute murder. It might be described as ‘beating out the ghost’. A fakir who was considered a very holy man, though in all probability he was three-parts mad, was brought by relations to the bedside of a person who had been ill for several months. The fakir declared that the patient was possessed of a ghost or evil spirit, and by way of a cure commenced to beat him with hot irons and blow smoke down his nostrils. The patient's cries of agony were said to be those of the ghost within him; and the belabouring went on until the miserable sufferer succumbed to his injuries.

This 'beating out of ghosts' is not an uncommon practice.

Another Amritsar case concerned an Indian lady of position who was discovered driving in a cab with a maid-servant and the dead body of a man. The idea was to dump the body somewhere away from the city. This case reached the High Court, where the lady was given the benefit of the doubt. It is very difficult to ascertain what has really happened behind the *purdah*, and money can buy any number of witnesses ready to perjure themselves; so it could not be said with any certainty whether the lady's lover had been deliberately poisoned, or whether being unable to obtain her favours he had destroyed himself.

After the War, when I was Sessions Judge of Ambala, there occurred within eighteen months two horrible cases of "blood sacrifice." In each case one of the culprits was a wealthy Hindu woman. It is the main object in life of every Hindu wife to bear a son, thereby ensuring her husband's entry into Paradise. In each case the family astrologer had told the wife that in order to obtain her desire she must bathe in the blood of a child. It was noticeable that in each case the kidnapped child was the offspring of a Mohammedan.

And speaking of human sacrifices I may mention an occurrence which took place as recently as 1933. It was a sacrifice to Ganesh, the Elephant God; and at the feet of the idol were found broken coconuts, burnt camphor and the dead bodies of seven people—a man and his wife and their five children. No foul play was suspected; and the inference drawn was that the man had slain his entire family and had then committed suicide.

I have already remarked on how potent a motive for murder in the mind of an Indian is revenge; and

sometimes this is carried to extraordinary lengths. I remember one case in which a man deliberately murdered his stepfather *with the latter's consent*. The stepfather had been ill for a long time and had not much expectation of life; so he and the stepson actually plotted together that the former should be murdered by the latter, the blame being cast on three innocent persons who were their mutual enemies!

Several years ago there was a strange occurrence in a certain hill-station which, had there been clear proof instead of only suspicion, might have furnished an example of the perfect 'murder at a distance'.

There resided in the hill-station an elderly spinster of romantic disposition, with a friend who dabbled in hypnotism and crystal-gazing. According to rumour the friend, who hoped to benefit by her death, induced her to believe that if on a certain night she lay upon her bed dressed in bridal array and drank at a certain hour of the night a potion, she would receive a visit from her spirit-lover. For two nights she tried the experiment, but nothing happened; and all that she drank was probably a harmless sleeping-draught. The third night something did happen: for she was found the following morning dead with an empty glass beside her. However, at the time when she must have drunk the potion the crystal-gazer was very many miles away in a town on the plains. The mystery was never solved, as to whether she had been poisoned or whether, disappointed at the non-appearance of her spirit-lover, she had destroyed herself.

In my chapter about Indian States I have made some mention of bands of dacoits who will often hold a whole countryside in terror. One such person, a regular 'Dick Turpin', was the possessor of a roan mare which was almost deified. She could understand his every command and would come to him at his

whistle. The police devised a clever plan for his capture, arriving on the scene when he was holding up an entire village from the roof of a house in the guise of a marriage party complete with 'bride'. His end, though rather ignominious, was melodramatic. Whistling up his mare and with a brass water-pot on his head to guard him from bullets, he rode full tilt at a gateway. But the brass pot crashing against a beam hurled him backwards out of the saddle and broke his neck. The trial of forgery cases occupies much of the time of the courts, and I could name several small towns in the Punjab in which the practice of forgery might almost be considered the principal industry. False coining is also prevalent; and it is an interesting fact that the earth preferred by the coiner for making his moulds is that ejected from the bodies of white ants as they tunnel their nefarious way through the mud walls of buildings. It is peculiarly free from gritty particles which might cause an uneven surface in the moulds.

An uncommon forgery case was that connected with the will of a wealthy Indian lady who had died. An English doctor was allowed to penetrate behind the *purdah*, but was only shown a maid-servant whom, believing her to be the Rāni, he certified as being sound in mind and body. The dead woman's thumb-impression and that of the maid-servant as a witness were afterwards taken upon blank sheets of paper. Unfortunately for the plotters it was subsequently proved that whereas the Rāni had been in the habit of using her left thumb for the making of impressions, the impression on the forged will had been made with the right!

The crime of poisoning is very prevalent in India. Arsenic and *datura* are favourite poisons, both being easily obtainable.

During the cholera season one may expect to find cases of arsenic poisoning, for the symptoms are very similar. *Datura*, which is prepared from the seeds of the thorn-apple, is much in favour with the women; and not always for the purpose of murder. Sometimes, it is true, an overdose may be given; but one of its advantages is that a properly dosed husband may remain all night in a room with his wife and her lover, and in the morning retain no knowledge of what has occurred. It is a powerful narcotic, and among the symptoms are fits of crazy laughter and the snatching at imaginary objects in the air. It is usually administered in food; but can also be put into a hookah ready for smoking.

Many a village has its professional poisoner, frequently a woman; and among the poisoner's preparations is another drug used to produce symptoms akin to those of cholera. The drug is 'Ricin' obtained from hot-drawn castor-oil. It is produced by heat, whereas cold-drawn castor-oil is produced by pressure.

Then again, there is the root of the yellow jasmine, which causes a very high temperature or apoplexy. In the log kept by the village watchman the death may be recorded as one from heat-stroke.

Aconite, the ground-up root of monk's-hood or wolf's-bane, may be sprinkled in curry wherein it is tasteless and gives a quick but painless death. One test for it is the placing of part of the contents of the stomach upon a frog and watching whether it causes the creature to froth all over. To my mind one of the most interesting methods of Indian poisoning is by means of the pretty little seeds—red with a black spot at one end—familiarly known as '*rattis*'. They are the seeds of a climbing plant found in scrub-jungle, the plant being *Abrus Precatorius*, so-called on account of its employment for making rosaries.

The weight of a seed is eight barley-corns, and the seeds are much used by Indian jewellers for weighing purposes—the weight of a jewel being so many *rattis*. It is popularly believed that though two seeds may differ in weight, the weight of any three will equal the weight of another three.

One might eat them with safety; but it is deadly to make from them an injection under the skin; and the poisoner knows that a prick from a sharpened splinter of bamboo dipped in *ratti* paste will make it appear that his victim has died from the bite of a cobra. They also come in very handy for destroying an enemy's cattle. According to my medical friends, whereas *ratti* paste smeared on the skin of a frog will kill it, snake-poison will not.

I understand that the seeds are also useful to malingerers. They should be soaked till soft and be strung with a needle and thread. The thread becomes impregnated with *Arabin*, a powerful irritant. If the needle and thread be pulled through the skin above the knee, the knee will swell, a cure being effected by packing the knee with wet sand for an hour.

A truly diabolical instrument of murder, of which I have only heard and am without personal knowledge, consists in the spores of a certain fungus. Administered in food the spores will thrive on the mucous membranes of the victim's throat and chest until death results from consumption. And when the body dies, the spores die also: there is left no trace!

For these poisons the *bazar*-quacks and the professional poisoners themselves are ready to sell antidotes. Some may possibly be efficacious: others certainly are worse than useless.

Snake-stones taken from the hoods of cobras are popularly believed to have virtue; but the most famous are the *bezoar* stones, about which there is a good deal of history.

Their name appears to have been derived from a Persian word meaning 'counter-poison'; and two varieties of them have been recognised. The best known and most valued is the oriental bezoar, a calculus or hard concretion found in the stomach of the Persian goat. A less valuable variety is the occidental from the stomach of the Peruvian llama or West Indian goat. There are also hair bezoars found in the stomachs of cows and other animals. Examples of all these may be seen in the museum of the Royal College of Surgeons.

Their composition appears to consist of undigested portions of food mixed with some insoluble organic acid; and they are found in the stomachs of ruminants, not carnivores. They have a central nucleus round which the material is deposited in layers; and are dark brown or olive green and highly polished.

Miraculous powers were attributed to the bezoar stones. They were regarded not only as antidotes for poisons, but as sovereign remedies for epilepsy, jaundice and other complaints. They were held in such high esteem that they were looked upon as valuable presents by native Eastern princes. The Shah of Persia presented three to Napoleon I.

Powdered bezoar appears as a medicine in the London Pharmacopœia of 1746; and in Persia it was the custom to take a dose at the beginning of the year in the belief that it would safeguard a person from the effects of poison during the ensuing year. It was, in fact, early prophylactic medicine.

As an antidote against poison the bezoar suffered a severe blow when Ambrose Paré (the father of modern surgery, who died in 1590) dosed with its powder a French criminal condemned to death having previously administered a substantial dose of arsenic. The arsenic won!

Tavernier, the old Indian traveller of the middle Seventeenth Century, who has described for us the Peacock Throne of the Great Mogul, paid five hundred crowns for one specimen of the bezoar, afterwards selling it for nearly three times as much.

On account of their high price imitations were made and sold compounded of chalk, musk and aromatic gums slightly gilded. The harem eunuchs are said to have been adepts at turning out 'fake' stones. Bezoars set in gold or silver loops were often suspended in liquids to which it was desired to impart their supposed virtues.

My notebooks contain some lighter material. Among my records I find a memorandum about an old lady who appeared before a court charged with voluntarily obstructing the rolling-stock of a railway. Fortunately she was able to explain that arriving late from her village and being anxious not to miss the train, she had decided to delay its departure by the simple expedient of seating herself upon the track just in front of the engine.

Another note connected with trains concerns an elderly lunatic accused of attempting a derailment by placing sleepers across the line. He, too, had his explanation ready. It had been revealed to him in a dream that the soul of his departed *Guru* (his spiritual guide), with whom for some reason or another he was displeased, resided in locomotives; so he had conceived the brilliant idea of throwing a few trains off the line in the hope of causing his defunct teacher annoyance.

As an example of the difficulty experienced by Indian judges in arriving at the truth may be cited the case of a man arraigned for stealing a buffalo cow. The story of the prosecution at first appeared to be correct and to be supported by apparently reliable

witnesses. But the correct version emerged from a welter of conflicting statements, and what had really happened was this; the accused, who was a *chalāk ādmi*, a crafty fellow, had made a bet with the owner of a camel that by squatting on the ground he could print off with the lower portion of his anatomy tracks which would be indistinguishable from those of the animal. After some exhaustive experimenting the *Panchāyat* (village committee) had decided that the crafty fellow had won his bet; and the camel had been made over to him. A month later the disgusted loser, unable to bear his loss any longer, had rushed into court with a bogus complaint against the winner of the alleged theft of a buffalo cow. To the best of my recollection the presiding magistrate decided that as the winner of the bet had had his laugh and free camel's milk for a month, the animal should be returned to its previous owner; so all ended well.

Against the 'slimness' of the Indian litigant a judge must be always on his guard. In the course of a certain appeal considerable argument took place regarding one "Lala Lal Chand, Managing Director" of (let us say) "The All-India-Honest-Man Company" in liquidation. Searching inquiry elicited the interesting fact that "Lala Lal Chand, Managing Director," had attained the mature age of four years and a half; and further, that the company was a bogus one started by his relations with his patrimony.

A ruse that failed was that attempted on behalf of a lady who was particularly anxious not to appear before the court in person. There are rules excusing *purdah* ladies from personal attendance whenever possible; but for some special reason her personal appearance in that particular case was imperative. Adjournments were obtained several times on various grounds, but at length the Court strictly ordered that she must be

present at the next hearing. On the day fixed her lawyer appeared and stated that she was duly in attendance outside the court, having been brought there in a palanquin suffering from plague! Was she to be brought into court? The judge passed yet another order of adjournment; but at the same time—a point which had not been foreseen—despatched a message to the local health officer notifying him of a suspected case of plague. That zealous official, hurrying to the address given him, was in time to catch the plague suspect narrating a gleeful account of the success of her ruse to a circle of admiring relations.

Influenza and plague have caused a dearth of marriageable females; and the result has been an increase in the crime of *barda farōshi*—the illegal sale of women. Gangs operating in the Punjab come largely from the United and Central Provinces and the women are frequently their confederates. The unsuspecting Jat villager who needs a wife less for her beauty than for her household qualities is easily induced to part with his hard-earned cash to some member of the gang posing as the woman's uncle; and after a few days he finds himself a 'grass widower', the woman having rejoined her accomplices with all the money and ornaments she could lay her hands on.

The fact that it would be both unlucky and bad manners to look beneath the *burqa* at the time of the bargain facilitates deception. On one occasion a villager purchased a slim young bride and started joyfully homeward, the lady following him veiled from head to foot in her *burqa*. But before arriving at the house the 'bride' suddenly cast aside her covering, and to his chagrin the astounded Jat beheld a particularly agile boy speeding over the plain in the direction taken by his fellow conspirators.

In India we become acquainted with many varieties

of the confidence trick. One of them consists in the 'doubling' of a currency note, the victim usually being a wealthy moneylender. First of all it is necessary to gain the confidence of the dupe. A sheet of white paper cut to the size of the note is treated with chemicals, and is then placed with the note between two pieces of glass. After being warmed for a few minutes the pieces of glass are taken apart; and behold!—a brand new note is found in place of the sheet of white paper! This operation merely requires a little sleight of hand. The victim is then invited to furnish a note of higher value for the next experiment, and is eventually handed a sealed packet with instructions to keep it warm and refrain from opening it for three days. At the end of that time he finds that the only contents of the packet are some scraps of charred paper—and that the swindlers have departed elsewhere.

A variation of this trick is the duplicating of a gold nugget. The nugget is placed in an earthen pot which the dupe is allowed to seal up and place over a small charcoal fire. But the bottom of the pot, being lightly stuck on with clay, falls out and lets the gold down into the ashes, whence it is removed by the member of the gang whose duty it is to attend to the fire.

An ingenious method of robbery was that adopted by some burglars who dug a tunnel underneath a cotton factory, abstracted a number of bales of cotton, and then resold them to the owner of the factory.

A judge in India must always view confessions of guilt with suspicion; and confessions made to the police are not evidence. On one occasion the accused confessed to the murder of a girl whom he had abducted. A corpse was found in a canal, which was not the corpse of the girl, but which her relations identified as hers with the object of getting the abductor hanged. It transpired that the accused was simply gambling on

the fact that apart from his confession there was absolutely no evidence of the murder. In the event of an acquittal he would thus be able to retain possession of the girl: and as a last resort she could always be produced.

An amusing case was that of an elderly Gond, one of the primitive race which inhabits Central India, who walked into a police station and accused himself of the murder of his young wife. He, however, absolutely declined to say what he had done with the body. That, he said, was for the police to discover. An intensive search went on for some time, and eventually the lady was discovered alive and well living with another man in a distant village.

Taxed with this, the Gond's reply was somewhat as follows:

"It is true that I did not kill her. She had run away with someone, and I could not find her. So I thought that the Sirkār (Government) should find her for me; and you have done so. I am very much obliged. Great is the power of the Sirkār!"

Now and again the proceedings of Indian Courts justify the famous dictum uttered by 'Mr. Bumble'. It was a decision of an Indian judge, dead many years ago, which gave rise to the following curious state of affairs. In a case between an uncle and his nephew about a house it was decided that the upper portion of it belonged to the uncle, while the lower portion belonged to the nephew. The uncle, however, according to the decree was to have no right-of-way over the nephew's portion so as to come into possession of the share allotted to him. The bewildered uncle applied again to the judge who decided that on the evidence he could not revise his former finding, but passed an order to the effect that possibly it might be feasible to put the uncle in possession of his portion by means

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of a ladder or by publicly proclaiming in the street outside the house the fact of his ownership.

Aeroplanes not having been invented at the time, a Court official known as the Civil Nazir inserted the uncle by means of a ladder into the upper storey; from which elevated position he commenced to throw into the street pieces of paper addressed to the Deputy Commissioner of the District calling for assistance and complaining that he was starving and unable to descend. Eventually his friends broke a hole through a brick wall and delivered him. The nephew then commenced a fresh suit against his uncle for damages and another suit against the Civil Nazir for leaning the ladder against his wall.

A somewhat grim humour attaches to a note about a celebrated dacoit who was executed for a series of brutal murders. On the scaffold he expressed his intention of making his will and announced that as he had a total of twenty-two years of unexpired sentences for other crimes of violence he wished to bequeath ten years' imprisonment to each of the two sub-inspectors who had taken part in his arrest and two years to the Sessions Judge!

A note in lighter vein concerns a certain Thomas Atkins who walked into court one day and inquired: "You're a judge, sir, ain't yer? Well, I got my wife in a cab outside; and we want yer to divorce us."

The pleasantest relations exist as a rule between the Bench and the Bar along with mutual confidence; but personally I always found it desirable to see the individual on whose behalf counsel might put forward in appeal a plea for mercy on the ground that his client was 'only a raw youth'. Not infrequently the 'raw youth' would prove to be a burly bearded gentleman aged about thirty.

One of the most novel methods of exciting com-

passion that ever came under my notice was that adopted by an elderly rascal accused of burglary. On being brought into court he extracted and exhibited his false teeth in four pieces. Presumably his idea was to show that by reason of his physical infirmities he was ill-fitted for the profession of Bill Sikes; but unfortunately for him there was no suggestion in the evidence for the prosecution that he had been picking locks with his teeth.

A tooth, by the way, may be a valuable asset. The knocking out of a tooth constitutes the offence of 'grievous hurt'; and I remember the strange complaint being brought against one individual that he was the owner of a particularly fine loose tooth which he was in the habit of *hiring out* for use in 'grievous hurt' cases!

Notes on quaint arguments advanced by counsel include one about a lawyer who in a vagrancy case insisted that his client was 'not out of employment' since he was 'living on the earnings of a lady of easy virtue.'

In the courts of some Honorary Judges the custom used to prevail, though it was strictly discouraged, of allowing a case to be decided by the oath of one of the parties. The plaintiff would offer to forgo his claim if his opponent would swear by his son's head, by a cow's tail, or on a bottle of the sacred water of the Ganges that the claim was false. Until fairly recently there existed in some Courts a practice of swearing by lighted camphor. A piece of camphor would be lighted; and the defendant after taking an oath that a certain portion of the claim against him was not due would extinguish the flame, judgment being given accordingly.

Other ancient practices now rapidly falling into disuse may still be seen in some of the more old-

fashioned districts. A litigant may appear before the Court and stand on one leg signifying to the judge "You are my support". Or if he be a Hindu, holding a bunch of grass in his mouth signifying "You are my cow" (that is, "the object I most revere"). Sometimes an individual will present himself with a flaming torch or carrying a lighted brazier on his head to light the way to justice. He is usually a person with a shocking bad case!

The old patriarchal system of administering justice has practically passed away; and the days are over when a judge might relieve the monotony by trying and fining the sparrows which had desecrated his court, the fines being paid by the menial staff whose duty it was to see to it that no sparrows were there.

It was the same judge who had a novel method of dealing with his cat when it had been killing his chickens. The cat was duly tried, convicted and sentenced to hard labour, the sentence being carried out with the help of a police constable who walked the convict up and down during the term of its sentence with a small bag of sand strapped across its back.

English judges in India are universally known to be unbribable. There is the historic case of the Plaintiff who suggested to his pleader that the judge should be offered a bribe. The pleader told him that this would be worse than useless. Afterwards, when the Plaintiff had won a singularly weak case, the pleader expressed his surprise. His client chuckled. "I offered the judge a bribe," he said, "but I took care to sign the Defendant's name to the letter!"

## CHAPTER XI

DURING this period in Lahore there were occasional short sojourns in Simla, where one of the outstanding notabilities was Jack Cowans—otherwise the late General Sir John Cowans who in the Great War was designated the best Quartermaster-General since Moses.

A man of great talent and strong personality, Jack Cowans was likewise 'a lad'; and one of the inventions of his fertile brain was his Devils' Dinner-Party. This took place in the old Châlet, and my wife officiated as the Recording Angel. The setting was certainly realistic: for the dinner was served in Hell, each step of the narrow staircase leading thither being paved with a good intention. There were frequent explosions, and at intervals enormous spiders flopped down from the ceiling upon the company. The waiters were garbed in the robes of the Inquisition; and as a final touch of realism there was a steaming cauldron from which protruded the legs of dolls representing babies being boiled for the Chief Devil's repast!

Another well-known character was 'Slog-Wog', the late Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur Sloggett who was head of the medical services in India. He died not very long ago with a splendid record of war service finishing with the Great War, having been in his earlier years dangerously wounded in the Soudan.

'Slog-Wog' was a man whom nothing could disconcert. At a Viceregal dinner-party seated next to a lady whom he did not know he casually inquired when her husband would be coming up the hill on leave. The lady, whose husband (a great friend of ours) had been killed in a Frontier scrap a year or so before,

explained quietly that she was a widow. Many men would have felt rather uncomfortable; but not so 'Slog-Wog', who beamed upon her, slapped his knee and enthusiastically ejaculated:

"Splendid!"

On another occasion several of us were lunching at the house of a high official, whose *chef* was noted for his preparation of fatted quails. 'Slog-Wog' had always an eye for beauty; and he brought with him to lunch a luscious American 'peach' who happened to be spending the season in Simla. Much to his disgust his host immediately appropriated the 'peach', and after lunch was over took her off to see the garden. As neither of them returned, we other guests gradually drifted away leaving the fuming 'Slog-Wog' alone waiting to resume his escort duties. His parting remark was characteristic: "I suppose she's all right. I haven't heard any screams."

During one 'cold weather' India received a visit from Mr. Ramsay MacDonald who came out as a representative of the Labour Party to view the land. Rightly or wrongly we certainly gained the impression that he was sourly biased against his own folk in a foreign country. Another Parliamentary visitor was the late Mr. Edwin Montagu, who at the time was Under-Secretary of State for India.

He attended my court to watch the trial of a murder case; and struck me as being a solemn individual who asked a number of very foolish questions. He certainly possessed but little sense of humour. One night when the guests were leaving after an entertainment at Government House there was a very slight shock of earthquake. Turning to a friend of mine he inquired rather agitatedly whether such shocks occurred often, and seemed quite perturbed when my friend with a twinkle in his eye replied: "Almost daily!"

I was destined to see more of him when I returned from France to India on the same vessel at the end of 1917. He was then Secretary of State for India on his way out to initiate his Reforms scheme. What struck me then was his very limited knowledge, in spite of his high position, of that country. For instance, having recently been responsible for the appointment of an Indian barrister as Chief Justice of a High Court, he asked me whether the gentleman in question was a Hindu or a Mohammedan? The most elementary acquaintance with Indian names would have informed him that the gentleman could be nothing but a Hindu. One can understand a British working man talking about 'them Sikes', or a Society lady in England offering at one of her entertainments beef sandwiches to a Hindu, ham sandwiches to a Mohammedan and cigarettes to a Sikh; but a Secretary of State for India——!

A visitor of even more exalted rank who arrived at about Christmas time of 1910 was the Crown Prince of Germany, known to the world familiarly as 'Little Willie'. He was making a world tour extending to India, China and Japan and home across the United States. He came with a General and a distinguished Staff who amused us by giving out that few of them were conversant with English. They sometimes surprised us by speaking French among themselves.

During the Christmas holidays I took my wife to see the sights of Cawnpore, Lucknow and Benares, ending up with the Allahabad Exhibition. At Benares we bought some of the coloured oleographs sold in the vicinity of the temples which depict the Hindu idea of Hell. A few of them are reproduced in this book. The tortures really explain themselves: the man shut up in a narrow box, the person tormented by scorpions

and so on. The Hindi lettering on them often ends with the word '*Phal*', which means either 'fruit' or 'punishment'; possibly the 'fruit' of past lives? According to Hindu ideas the worst punishments are reserved for him who may injure a holy Brahmin: such a one, after a period in the kingdom of Yama, Lord of Hell, will be born again a devil with no dwelling either on earth or in the air, condemned to drink the filthy juice of the palm-tree mixed with the saliva of dogs from a human skull.

During one 'cold weather' my wife enjoyed the princely hospitality of His Highness the Maharaja of Kapurthala on the occasion of his son's wedding. As everyone knows, the Maharaja is a most travelled and cultured prince who speaks French like a Parisian. Many of his French friends came out to India for the festivities; and among them was a gentleman acclaimed as an arbiter of fashion in Paris. Quite unintentionally he caused a good deal of amusement. At the farewell banquet, after making an impassioned speech about the regal munificence of his host, he drank off his champagne and flung his glass shattering against a wall. The poor old Maharaja of Kashmir, who died not very long ago, nearly had a fit! An old-fashioned man, unacquainted with the strange customs of European society, he imagined that a most deadly insult had been offered to his host!

One evening there was a nautch, the principal performer being a celebrated nautch-girl brought at great expense from Calcutta. The French gentleman, knowing nothing about nautch-girls and regarding her simply as a talented artiste, bowed profoundly in front of her—which pleased her very much. After a time a native servitor was sent to tell her to bring her performance to an end, which he did by stalking across the room and bawling "Get out!" while he hustled her

through a doorway. He had no illusions about nautch-girls.

Another interesting wedding which my wife attended was that of a daughter of our old friend, the Nawāb of Loharu, a Mohammedan State in the Punjab in the direction of Rajputana. This entailed a journey of thirty-four miles across a portion of the Bikanir desert in very slow-moving transport, with the discomfort of hot winds and sand-storms. However, she and the lady with her were privileged to witness an old-fashioned wedding with the inside scenes of the Zenana; the bride's magnificent clothes and jewels and toilet requisites (which included a silver tongue-scraper!); and last, but by no means least, the immensely fat bridegroom seeing his bride's countenance for the first time in a looking-glass, while the women stuffed his mouth with sweetmeats and '*pān*'. The guests arrived for the wedding on some very unusual vehicles.

After a period of leave home we returned to India in time to be present at the Viceroy's, Lord Hardinge's, State entry into the new capital of Delhi. This was the occasion on which an attempt was made to assassinate him by means of a bomb flung from a window whilst he was riding on an elephant through the Chandni Chauk, a wide thoroughfare, the famous silver-market to Delhi. One of his attendants was killed, and the Viceroy himself was seriously injured, among the ingredients of the bomb being gramophone needles.

At the time of the occurrence most of us were sitting in a great arena awaiting His Excellency's arrival. We heard what sounded to us like the report of a gun; but imagined it to be a signal and were unable to understand why there was so long delay. Then Sir Reginald Craddock, who at that time was Home Member of the Viceroy's Council, entered and solemnly announced to

us what had occurred. Lord Hardinge had behaved with the greatest pluck and had ordered that the ceremonies should be proceeded with.

Another fine instance of pluck was provided by an English lady, who went into the house from which the bomb had apparently been thrown and looked beneath the *burqas* of the veiled women assembled therein. Had the assassin been there disguised as a woman, there is every reason for supposing that she would have lost her life.

In connection with Indian revolutionary methods about which I shall soon be writing, it is interesting to note that some years later when being tried in another case one of the accused boasted of having been the perpetrator of this outrage. Further, that two days after the outrage—on Christmas Day of 1912—a banquet was given in San Francisco by Indian revolutionaries to celebrate the dastardly attempt.

What surprised me much was the attitude adopted by several of my old Indian friends towards the matter. I talked with many of them about it, and what they told me they could not understand was why, when the Chandni Chauk was lined with troops, the troops were not ordered to turn about and fire point-blank into the suspected house. I protested that such action would have meant the killing of many innocent people. They agreed that this would have been so; but urged that an attempt had been made to slay the King's representative, that such an order would certainly have been given by any old-time Indian ruler, and that all over India the populace would have appreciated the justice of it!

There came the Great War; and thenceforward the casualty lists began to show the names of many men killed or wounded whom we had known so well in the old cheery Simla days. Among them were Colonel

Victor Brooke of the 9th Lancers, who had been Military Secretary to Lord Minto. Another was Colonel Hyla Holden killed in the last engagement of the Jodhpur Lancers at Aleppo. He had formerly been Commandant of the Viceroy's Bodyguard; and was the intimate friend of gallant old Maharaja Sir Partap Singh, one of whose griefs was that he had not fallen alongside Holden fighting for England. Then there was Colonel FitzGerald, the man who did not scruple to keep the awe-inspiring 'K' up to the mark with his engagements. He went down with his great Chief on the *Hampshire*, and his body was washed ashore on the coast of the Orkneys.

In some ways the War was felt much less in India than by people in England. Naturally entertainments were restricted to those arranged for War charities; and my wife scored a great success with the 'Persian Garden' performed in costume; the Persian Minister, Sir Daud Khan, being so delighted with it that he gave her a beautifully illustrated copy of the 'Rubáiyát'. But there were no Zeppelin raids and no necessity for food restrictions. When I returned to India at the end of 1917 I found the shops bursting with cakes and chocolates. Like other people I used to send parcels Home; and everything bore the journey well except the cheese. That was found to be only fit for catching mice; but as the cat ate the mice there was a saving on the meat ration.

Not long after the commencement of the Great War the Punjab began to experience its own particular brand of trouble; nothing less than a desperate, frustrated attempt at a revolution known as the *Ghadr* (Mutiny) Conspiracy. For myself there came the most strenuous year of my life.

The *Ghadr* Conspiracy originated on the Pacific Coast of America, its centre was San Francisco and its

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chief promoter was a Delhi Hindu named Har Dayal. But before discussing the activities of those revolutionaries and their subsequent trial, I would say something about anarchism in India.

Anarchism, which may now be said to be rooted in Bengal, appears to have been started as far back as 1897 when one Tilak, a Mahratta Brahmin of the Bombay side, began the idea through his newspaper. Government measures to deal with the plague gave him a handle; and the Plague Commissioner and a British officer were murdered in the streets of Poona.

In 1905 one Krishnavarma, who was also a Bombay man, a barrister and a graduate of Balliol, founded in London the 'India Home Rule Society', started a newspaper and created in Highgate a secret society at whose meetings lectures were delivered on the construction of infernal machines. Not long afterwards Sir Curzon Wyllie, Political A.D.C. at the India Office, was murdered at an India Office reception by a Punjabi student.

Krishnavarma stated in the Press that he approved of the deed and regarded the murderer as a 'martyr' in the cause of Indian Independence; but at the same time he and others of the India House conspirators transferred their headquarters to Paris. Two of them went to Pondicherry in French territory on the Madras side to start a revolutionary journal and continue their plotting; and a little later on came the assassination of the District Magistrate of a Madras district.

Anarchism and secret societies likewise commenced in Bengal; and there the handle for the revolutionaries was the Partition of Bengal for which Lord Curzon was responsible in 1905. The two chief conspirators in that portion of India were one Arabindo Ghose and his brother, sons of a doctor practising in England. Arabindo had been brought up and educated entirely

in England, and had obtained a First Class in the Classical Tripos at Cambridge. What had embittered him was the fact that having passed into the Indian Civil Service he had been rejected after a riding test.

The brothers, having returned to Calcutta, started publishing a pamphlet associated with one of the names of Kāli, the Hindu goddess of Destruction, distorting the actions of Government and preaching that English rule could be brought to an end 'in a single day'.

Various brutal outrages took place, one of them being an attempt to blow up the special train of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal; and another being the accidental murder by bombs of two English ladies whose carriage was mistaken for that of the Chief Presidency Magistrate of Calcutta.

And throughout the years anarchism in India has continued to spread; its branches exist in every quarter of the globe; it has never been extricated, but only occasionally for a time has been driven under ground. Its aim is the expulsion of the English from India by means of terrorism and the massacre of English men and English women, those most in danger being high officials, members of the judiciary and police officers, along with loyal Indians contemptuously described as 'well-wishers of the Government'.

But the man I am really concerned with is the arch-revolutionary named Har Dayal.

He was educated at a Cambridge Mission School in Delhi, where he came under the influence of a senior and trusted teacher of the school who happened himself to be a revolutionary. The teacher was subsequently hanged, the Sessions Judge describing him as "one who spent his life in furthering murderous schemes which he was too timid to carry out himself."

Har Dayal obtained a State scholarship and proceeded to St. John's College, Oxford; but shortly before the expiry of the scholarship he returned to India. Back in Lahore in 1908 he associated with Lajpat Rai (whose deportation the previous year I have already mentioned) and soon afterwards paid visits to London, Geneva and Paris, where he put up for a time with Krishnavarma.

Early in 1911 he arrived in the United States, established himself in California and there found much material for his revolutionary schemes ready to his hand. For several years a seditious movement had been spreading to corrupt the thousands of Sikh immigrants who had settled along the Pacific coast.

Until the fomenters of trouble had appeared on the scene these Sikhs had been law-abiding citizens contented with their lot, earning good pay in the timber yards and on the fruit farms of Oregon and the surrounding parts of the country. A good climate, good food and hard daily labour had turned them into magnificent physical specimens; in fact, so splendid was their physique that when they were to appear in the trials before my Tribunal special handcuffs had to be fashioned to fit their wrists.

In 1913 Har Dayal and his associates established a revolutionary Press in San Francisco, and the first number of the '*Ghadr*' (Mutiny) newspaper appeared on November 1st of that year. It openly incited to murder and mutiny and urged all Indians to return to India for such purposes. Soon it began to appear in various Indian languages; and its day of issue was altered to Tuesday, the day of the Hindu God of War. It announced meetings of the '*Ghadr*' Party, gave accounts of the proceedings thereat, held up to admiration Tilak, Arabindeo Ghose and other 'martyrs', and (this it is important to remember) expressed great sympathy and admiration for the German nation. It

ascribed to English rule both plague and famines; and even our harmless picnics in the Shalimar gardens near Lahore were described as constituting wanton desecrations of a tomb! The material of this foul rag certainly makes most interesting and instructive reading; and many were the devices adopted to smuggle it into India, boxes with double bottoms being a favourite device.

It was from the columns of this paper that we gleaned during the trials which I shall shortly be discussing certain evidence which was to my mind of intense interest. It was connected with the outbreak of the Great War into which England entered on August the 4th of 1914.

One has been led to believe that the outbreak of war was to some extent fortuitous, precipitated by the assassination of the Archduke Ferdinand and his wife on June the 28th of 1914 at Serajevo. Let us consult the '*Ghadr*' newspaper.

In one of its issues we find an account of a meeting held at Sacramento in California on *December the 31st of 1913*, at which portraits of famous seditionists and murderers were displayed on a screen and revolutionary mottoes were exhibited. At that meeting Har Dayal told his audience that Germany was preparing to go to war with England, and that it was time to get ready to go back to India for the coming revolution.

Previous to this, in an issue of the '*Ghadr*' of *November 15th of 1913* there had been sympathetic references to Germany; and in an issue of July the 21st of 1914 there was a review of a journal called '*Pro-India*' published at Zurich, in which there was an article by a German professor entitled '*Our Brothers in the East*'.

I could descant much more on this subject, but it suffices to say that Har Dayal (after being put on security in America and finding an American woman

ready to stand bail for him) contrived to leave the country, and at the outbreak of the war, along with another dangerous Indian revolutionary, was in Berlin.

There is abundant evidence to show to what extent German officials, ex-professors and ex-missionaries, not forgetting the German Consul-General at Shanghai, were in alliance with the revolutionaries; but the point I am trying to make is this: is there not sufficiently good documentary evidence to show that many months before the affair of Serajevo Har Dayal had fore-knowledge of a war already decided upon?

Behind the scenes in Paris were Krishnavarma and his associate Madame Kama. The '*Ghadr*' newspaper contains references to them: "*Krishnavarma and Madame Kama grow old in Paris*": in other words, hasten the revolution!

Madame Kama is a Parsi; and one asks oneself—“*que diable allait-elle faire dans cette galère?*” Above all other races in India the Parsis should like us, who give them security and enable them to pile up their prodigious fortunes.

From Paris came the Poison Manual and the Bomb Manual with the cynically diabolical instructions. The revolutionaries were well aware of their contents. Take, for instance, the method suggested for murdering a 'white monkey' (an Englishman) travelling by train.

The instructions commence with much inflammatory writing about the Englishman alone and asleep under an electric fan in his first-class carriage surrounded by his baggage and accompanied by his dog (the unclean animal of Mohammedans), while in third-class carriages are cooped a mass of perspiring Indians. A dark wayside station is reached, and the assassin descends holding his poison-syringe. It is a hot night, and the 'white monkey' sleeps with a bare arm resting on the window ledge. One little prick, and the assassin

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can pass on in the darkness. Should his victim awake, he will think that he has been bitten by a mosquito: but the chances are that he will never wake again.

As regards bombs, the first were crude contrivances, often cigarette tins bound with wire and filled with nails or jute-needles (in the case of Lord Hardinge with gramophone needles). Nowadays, I understand, they are more of the type of the Mills bomb which we knew in the War. A local foundry near Calcutta was recently turning out hundreds of these under the impression that they were required as soap-moulds.

During their trial in Lahore Jail the conspirators began the making of bombs; but fortunately for us there was one ingredient which they could not obtain, namely ammonium picrate. A heavy brass bomb, fashioned from an ordinary milk-vessel to which had been affixed a screw-top with a handle is one of my trophies.

It was intended for the blowing up of a bridge; but I find it very useful for keeping my dining-room door from slamming to on a windy day.

## CHAPTER XII

HERALDING the approaching storm came the '*Komagata Maru*', a chartered Japanese vessel which dropped anchor in the Hughli river on September the 27th, 1914. On board of her were four hundred disaffected Sikhs and a small number of Mohammedans. The adventures of this ship make interesting reading.

The Canadian authorities had for some time past been growing tired of the activities of Indian seditionists. One of them they deported, and he was immediately hailed by his revolutionary brethren as a 'martyr'. The Canadian immigration laws were very strictly tightened up with regard to the entry into that country of Asiatics. This naturally constituted a grievance.

One Gurdit Singh, a Sikh, with the object of defying the law proceeded to charter the Japanese vessel and collected a large number of passengers to whom he gave promises that he would manage to get them into Canada. He was a man well enough known in certain Eastern circles, and there is no doubt that he must have been perfectly aware that he would be refused permission to land his passengers at Vancouver. But his was a two-fold object: he wanted their passage-money and he knew that the refusal would stir up further ill-feeling against the 'white men'.

From the very start of the voyage sedition was fomented among the passengers. On the way to Vancouver bundles of the '*Ghadr*' newspaper were taken on board and circulated at intermediate ports: meanwhile, to their shame be it said, white socialists in Canada, the secretary of whose society was an Indian, were helping to make things worse.

At Vancouver the authorities were adamant, and only a very few of the passengers were allowed to land. Not unnaturally the remainder of them, furious at having paid their passage-money for nothing, were more than ever embittered against the 'white man', Gurdit Singh having taken very good care to lay the entire blame on the Canadian authorities.

Eventually in July of 1914, after attempts to land had been made and after a fight with the Canadian police, the '*Komagata Maru*' started her return voyage under a threat of naval force, but fully provisioned by the authorities.

At Yokohama her ship's company learned of the outbreak of the Great War; and were still more infuriated when it became known that they would not be allowed to land at intermediate ports, but must proceed direct to Calcutta. Hong Kong and Shanghai already possessed their quota of Indian revolutionaries, and wanted no more of them. In due course the vessel anchored in the Hughli with a cargo of desperadoes out for trouble, many of whom were in possession of arms and ammunition.

Just three weeks before the vessel's arrival there had come into force an Ingress Ordinance applicable to the Punjab, under the provisions of which turbulent and undesirable persons returning from abroad might be interned for the safety of the community. To meet the vessel a body of Punjab Sikh police under British officers had been sent down to Calcutta, with orders to convey the passengers to the Punjab in a special train.

The Mohammedans agreed to enter the train; but the Sikhs formed a procession, and with a flag and the *Granth Sahib* (the sacred book of the Sikhs) carried in front of them proceeded to march on Calcutta. They were turned back on the road; firearms were used and persons on both sides were killed and injured. The

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Sikhs scattered about the country, some of them afterwards finding their way to the Punjab.

In the wake of the *Komagata Maru* came several other chartered Japanese vessels; and from October of 1914 onwards thousands of disaffected Indians, Sikhs for the most part, came pouring into the Punjab from the Pacific Coast and other places abroad. Landed at Calcutta and Madras, numbers of them were subsequently interned under the Ingress Ordinance; but very many of them managed to evade arrest and came North to raise trouble. The goal of the Sikhs, of course, was Amritsar, the headquarters of their religion.

All the way across, at Yokohama, Manilla, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Singapore and Penang they had been picking up adherents to their cause; and at Singapore an attempt had been made to seduce the Indian troops stationed there. On board the vessels oaths were taken on the *Granth Sahib*, fiery lectures were given and revolutionary songs and poems were sung and recited. A few quotations from the columns of the 'Ghadr' and other seditious pamphlets will show the nature of these:

“The enemy is hemmed in by the German lion.”

“Kill all Europeans, men and women. Kill them to a finish.”

“Spare neither parents nor offspring. Flay Europeans alive.”

“Kill the whites and fill the rivers with their corpses.”

“Drink the blood of infidel Christians.”

“Tell Umra blacksmith to make iron bars red-hot to brand the hips of tyrannic Europeans.”

“We will go up to England shouting Kill! Kill!”

“The patriot Gandhi cries in jail: we pay no heed to his cries, oh, Sikhs!”

Cleverly intermingled with these scraps of verse were appeals to Indian religious feeling; over and over again it is pointed out how the English are eaters of the flesh of the cow, the swine and the goat. And as I have already remarked famines, plague, the desecration of tombs and poverty were all set down to the effects of British rule; while the names of murderers and so-called 'martyrs' were held up to admiration. The theme of every poem and lecture was the expulsion of the 'white monkeys'. Germany was going to fight England; and so was India!

Arrived in the Punjab, the revolutionaries lost no time about setting to work. Many meetings were held, and gangs were formed which prowled in the jungles and attacked villages, murdering Indian loyalists, committing brutal dacoities and collecting money and arms. In addition to which bomb-making was commenced in real earnest.

About the end of December of 1914 there appeared upon the scene from down-country a young man of superior intellect and force of character, who at once began to play a leading rôle in this abortive revolution. He was Pingle, a young Mahratta Brahmin; and I shall have more to say about him when we come to the actual trial in Court.

His methods were more subtle than those of the common robber and murderer; and it was his intellect, I think, besides his enthusiasm and his staunchness to his confederates, that gave him an ascendancy over his rougher companions. It was not long before he had called to his aid a most sinister figure, a Bengali of the name of Rash Behari Bose who, it was noised abroad, was a bomb-expert. Both of these persons passed at times under different names, and their headquarters were at first at Amritsar. I may here say that Pingle was ultimately hanged, while Rash Behari vanished

completely when the revolution began to collapse and has never since been heard of.

After a time Pingle and 'the fat Bengali' moved on to Lahore, the capital of the Punjab, where they took on lease five houses for revolutionary purposes. Gradually there was elaborated a scheme for a general rising to take place on February the 21st of 1915. There was to be a general massacre of Europeans; and the plans were secretly disseminated about the country.

For certain reasons the scheme was put forward by two days, and was brought to naught by the magnificent bravery of a Sikh belonging to the Secret Police. For a week at the imminent risk of his life he lived as a confederate of the revolutionaries, and when the appropriate time had come gave the agreed-upon signal for a police raid. I am glad to say that he was appropriately rewarded.

The house in which he had lived was suddenly raided; several revolutionaries were captured; and among the things discovered were bombs and specimens of the newly-invented Indian national flag.

These flags were very interesting. They were tri-color flags, at first sight somewhat resembling the Belgian flag—being three broad bands of colour. They had been roughly put together by a *bazār* tailor; but the tricolor was obviously an adoption from the flag of the early days of the first French revolution. The French tricolor, as one remembers, was a blending of the red and blue colours of the cockades of the National Guard of Paris with the white of the cockades of the Royalist troops. This Indian national flag was equally symbolical of brotherhood.

The three broad stripes are dark blue, red and yellow; and it is significant that there is no green stripe, the special colour of the followers of the Prophet. Instead of this there was given to the Mohammedan the dark-

blue stripe, signifying that he was a brother thence-forward to the Sikh. The red stripe was for the Hindu, who would wade through English blood to independence. The Hindu colour, yellow, was for the Sikh, typical of the fact that from Hinduism he had emerged and to Hinduism was he returning. The flag, no doubt, had been thought out by a Hindu: in all probability by Har Dayal, arch-revolutionary. There are many references to it in the '*Ghadr*' newspaper; and, if I am not mistaken, it still holds place as the Indian national flag.

Of the specimens found in the Lahore bomb-house His Excellency the Viceroy had one, the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab had one, and as President of the Special Tribunal I 'pinched' one by way of a memento. It now adorns a wall of my 'Den'. I may note in passing that Pingle amusingly disclosed to the police that he and the other master-spirit, Rash Behari Bose, had watched the police raid from a house on the opposite side of the street before making themselves scarce!

With the daily capture of members of murderous marauding gangs and the failure of the scheme for a general rising the attempted revolution gradually collapsed.

Among the varied activities of the revolutionaries an important one was the seduction of students.

In this particularly dirty work India does not stand alone; it is a course pursued all over the globe. One well-known Indian seditionist had extended it to America, where he had founded scholarships for students. These passed into the control of Har Dayal; and it is not difficult to imagine what use he made of them.

The seditionists had two main objects in view. First of all, the younger generation might be taught to carry

on their dastardly doctrines for a long time to come. Secondly, they would be a great asset in times of real trouble. Should there be in any place a resort to mob-violence, it would be easy to place an impressionable youth who flattered himself that he was a leader in the forefront of the battle. The more elderly and cowardly instigators of the trouble might lurk behind in safety; but should the police be compelled to fire upon the mob, the student's death would furnish a splendid headline for the seditious newspapers:

‘Young Student Brutally Shot By Police.’

Such a headline might even produce indignant questions by politicians in Parliament.

I felt great pity for these deluded students, many of whom belonged to schools which were hot-beds of sedition; and my pity was strangely mingled with a feeling of exasperation in respect of a well-meaning and very distinguished man. He was none other than Lord Macaulay, the historian. The remarkable influence of the letter ‘M’ on the destinies of India I shall briefly refer to later on.

Lord Macaulay spent only four years in India from the time when he went out at a yearly salary of £10,000 as legal adviser to the Supreme Council in 1834. His admirable Indian Penal Code should have been for him a sufficient memorial; but unfortunately his advice was followed that European literature and science should be made the basis of higher education in India. Of Indian conditions and of the ordinary Indian character he had, presumably, the most meagre knowledge. What has been the result of his advice?

I believe that nowadays a more sensible and practical curriculum exists; but year after year for many years the Indian schools and universities turned

out batches of students, whose ill-nourished brains were crammed with scraps of Herbert Spencer and John Stuart Mill jostling fragments of Shelley's 'Ode to a Skylark'. The only professions for which they were in any way fitted were the clerky professions and the practice of the Law. And both of these professions became terribly over-stocked: all the minor posts in Government offices were filled, and there were not enough clients for the budding lawyers.

I can visualise the student in his garret at the top of a house in Lahore city. It is terribly cold there in the winter; and in the summer just under the roof it is terribly hot. He is very poor, and he is very hungry. By the light of a smoking oil-lamp he is endeavouring to memorise a mass of utterly useless English dates. Next morning he will be strolling about the Lawrence Gardens learning by heart pages of history, or gabbling parrot-fashion a collection of chemical formulæ.

He fails in his examination, and thereafter has a life-long grievance. He passes his examination, but can find no post open to him; and to his poverty has now been added discontent. What is going to happen to him?

One day, wandering aimlessly about the *bazar* (he has no money for the houses of the prostitutes, and is very likely a married man with two or three children), he meets a stout elderly stranger. The stranger enters into conversation; condoles with him; speaks a few well-chosen words about the hard-heartedness of British officials and invites him to come to his house one evening.

He goes there the next evening. He finds assembled several youths of his own age; but they are not depressed, they are cheerful and expectant, smoking cigarettes provided by the elderly stranger. For the first time for months our student has a good meal and a cigarette to follow.

With his companions he listens to an impassioned harangue. He learns that he and his companions are to be the coming leaders who will free the Mother-Land from the rule of the 'White Monkeys'. There will be several such meetings; food and a little money will be distributed; vows will be taken—should anyone lose his life, he will be forever a 'martyr'—before the idol of the goddess Kàli, goddess of destruction. Under her name of Bhawāni the Thug stranglers had worshipped her in days gone by; and the ritual may include the slashing to pieces of pumpkins with a sword, signifying the severing of the heads of English men and women.

This is what the old-fashioned system of 'higher education' has done for the Indian student!

Needless to say, the seduction of troops was one of the main objects of the conspirators. Besides the attempt to seduce the Malay States Artillery at Singapore, attempts were made at other ports, and Sikh priests were called upon to preach sedition. Most of these attempts resulted in failure; but in Hong Kong the lines of one Infantry regiment had to be changed to keep them out of touch with seditionists.

To mention the various attempts made in India would mean the reciting of the names of all the most important cantonments in the Punjab and the United Provinces, along with the name of one Indian State. It was hoped to bring about in Lahore Cantonment an attack on the magazine on the day fixed for the general rising.

In one station of the United Provinces, Meerut, the conspirators met with some success; and it was there in the lines of an Indian Cavalry regiment that the redoubtable Pingle (who was only twenty-two years of age, and who bore the names of two Indian gods—

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‘Vishnu’ and ‘Ganesh’) was arrested with his outfit of bombs and ‘Greek Fire’.

‘Greek Fire,’ I may say, dates back apparently to the Seventh Century and was employed until the Fourteenth, when gunpowder replaced it. Historians relate that on account of its devastating effects and the terror it inspired it kept Constantinople secure for centuries! I do not know Pingle’s recipe for it; but sulphur, pitch, charcoal and tow were among the old ingredients, and it was packed in tubes and used like a modern grenade.

In these attempts on troops the ‘*Ghadr*’, which in December of 1913 began to operate with a new press at 1324 Valencia Street, San Francisco, naturally took a hand. Here are a few pertinent quotations:

“Go and awake the armies. Why are you sleeping, ye wielders of the sword?”

“Oh, soldiers in the army, have you nought to do with Indians? Have you vowed to live as slaves of the English?”

“Let us preach sermons to the armies, that we must kill the Whites and cut them in pieces.”

“British soldiers at the time of fighting keep behind. They give their orders at a distance.”

This was a nasty cut at the British soldier; but the ‘*Ghadr*’ spared nobody. Some time before, the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, had intervened in a mosque dispute in Cawnpore. The ‘*Ghadr*’ labelled him the ‘Chief Dacoit’, adding the suggestion that he had intervened because he had “seen the hearts of people burning with enthusiasm”—in other words, that he had been frightened into doing what he had done.

I have made mention of the infamous ‘Bomb Manual’; and the following anecdote shows how easy it is to befool the simple-minded ‘Pagett M.P.’

One of the most important of the accused before us

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in the trial was an individual who was an M.A. of a University, and had been a College professor. As far back as 1909 he had been found in possession of an illustrated copy of the Bomb Manual; and we can imagine the professor poring over its pages studying the best method of converting brass water-vessels and brass ink-pots into the infernal machines which later on the revolutionaries were using. In front of us he could only say that he thought that the Manual had been found "in a box without a lock"—that is to say, that it had been planted on him.

There was abundant evidence against him of more recent activities, and my English colleague and I decided that his was a case for the death sentence. Our Indian colleague was of opinion that transportation for life would be sufficient.

The accused was a prominent member of a Hindu politico-religious society known as the Arya Samāj; the usual clamour started in the vernacular Press, and the death sentence was never carried out. Nor did his imprisonment last very long.

A year or so later there appeared in a newspaper an indignant letter from the itinerant ' Pagett ' telling of how in a train he had met ' a respectable Indian gentleman ' who had been imprisoned, and whose only crime had been that "he had written a ' history book '!" One really could not help smiling; for the respectable gentleman, who had doubtless engineered the meeting, had neglected to say that he had formerly been the possessor of a Bomb Manual, and that his history book had been largely a distorted version of the Great Mutiny published at a time best calculated to inflame the minds of his fellow-conspirators!

As the trial progressed we Special Commissioners had our own share of excitement. A message was sent in by the leader of one of the gangs from a jungle near

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Amritsar to the effect that he intended to do away with us one by one. My Indian colleague was to be the first to be removed, for being a traitor to his own countrymen. My English colleague was to be the next; and I, as President of the Tribunal, was to be reserved for a *bonne bouche*! We likewise received a warning from the Secret Police that it would be as well to soak in a bath any suspicious-looking type-addressed package which might reach us. I treated only one queer-looking packet in this way; and nothing worse came out of it than a quantity of explosive literature sent me by a lunatic who considered that he had been unjustly treated in a case in one of the lower courts.

The well-meant efforts of the police to safeguard us were sometimes rather embarrassing. I reached my hotel one day to find an enormous individual armed with a fearsome *lāthi* seated in front of my doorway. At my request the police removed him, but I fancy that he continued his watch and ward round a corner of the hotel admirably disguised as a sweetmeat-seller. Life in the hotel was not free from other embarrassments; for instance, the crowd of unfortunate women who would waylay my wife and the wife of the Superintendent of Police, and cling round their ankles imploring them to put in a word for their misguided husbands and sons.

I have already recorded the reasons for our conviction that Har Dayal, several months before the actual outbreak of the Great War, had foreknowledge that it had been decided upon. There lies before me a cutting from a San Francisco newspaper which adds strength to this conviction. Its headlines run thus:

Berlin's Hindu Plotters.

U.S. Trial for Pre-War Intrigue

According to this report United States District Attorney Preston stated in court that preparations for a war with England were being made in America *a year before the war* by German agents and Hindu agitators. There were a hundred and thirty-nine indictments, some concerned with a plot to foment revolution in India and others concerned with efforts to provision German warships at sea by means of the steamship *Sacramento*.

Mr. Preston averred that German Consulates were involved; that these efforts were financed by German agents; that an India Committee, an adjunct of the German Foreign Office, was created in Berlin, one of its members being Har Dayal, a fugitive from the United States; and that the committee had the personal attention of the German Foreign Secretary.

He went on to say that military expeditions were to be carried on from the United States and Siam, and that arms and munitions were to be smuggled through China and Japan. The whole affair, he said, was "a well-defined effort to force Great Britain to maintain large bodies of troops in India which otherwise would have been used against Germany."

My personal knowledge of this American trial was derived from an American missionary residing in the Punjab district of Hoshiarpur. He had happened to be on leave at the time in his own country, and on account of his knowledge of the language was called upon to act as court interpreter. He described to me how, all of a sudden, one of the desperadoes whipped out a revolver and shot dead a witness who was giving evidence against him. Without a moment's hesitation an official designated, I think, the Court Marshal drew his own automatic and firing across the crowded court dropped the murderer where he stood. Doubtless, a very efficient and satisfactory method of disposing

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of the matter: but can one imagine such a thing occurring at the Old Bailey?

I shall now devote a chapter to the trials of the revolutionaries at Lahore, in connection with what a writer in a newspaper described as “the gravest crisis in Indian history since the Great Mutiny.”

## CHAPTER XIII

THE first Lahore Conspiracy Case, as it was called, was described by the then Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, Sir Michael O'Dwyer, as "the most momentous criminal trial of this generation." In view of its importance to India during a period of especial stress His Honour's pronouncement cannot be considered to have been an over-statement of the matter. Since then there have been in India many similar big trials. In some ways it resembled that of the thirty-seven Camorristi, which was held at Viterbo during 1911 and lasted for more than a year involving three hundred sittings of the court.

The trial took place under the Defence of India Act of 1915, the preamble to which set forth that it was an Act to provide (owing to the existing state of war) for special measures to secure the public safety and the defence of British India and for the more speedy trial of certain offences. It contained two immensely important *mandatory* Sections, which I shall have to discuss at some length later on.

All trials under the Act were to be held by a tribunal of three Special Commissioners appointed by the Local Government. By virtue of seniority I, who at the time was Sessions Judge of Lahore, became President of the tribunal. My two colleagues were the late Mr. T. P. Ellis of the Indian Civil Service, likewise a Sessions Judge, and Pandit Sheo Narain, a Hindu gentleman who was a prominent member of the Lahore Bar.

During a year of hard labour, working often for ten hours or more a day in and out of Court, we tried

five conspiracy cases. In the second of the series we examined, including the accused, some fifteen hundred persons; but the first case was by far the most difficult and important, since most of the accused in it might have been described as ringleaders. I would note that all of them were defended by counsel; for those who could not afford to engage lawyers of their choice legal advisers were provided at the expense of the Government.

The First Conspiracy Case commenced on the morning of April the 26th, 1915; and our judgment was signed by us four and a half months later. It made a bulky printed volume of nearly four hundred pages, covering the facts and the law applicable. The proceedings before us were contained in some seven hundred printed pages. Each of us took it in turn to record the evidence, the other two recording notes for and against each accused so as to form a *dossier*. These three *dossiers* we used to check against each other. We took six weeks to write our judgment; and before writing it we had had to record, tabulate and pass under the most careful review the statements of nearly seven hundred persons. We had had likewise to examine a stupendous mass of printed and type-written documents, together with exhibits of every description ranging from revolutionary flags to bombs fashioned out of ordinary brass ink-pots.

The printed complaint filed by the Government Advocate disclosed the names of eighty-two accused, some of whom were absconding, and sixty-four of whom actually appeared before us in the dock. Almost all of these were Sikhs, there were a few Hindus, and Mohammedans were conspicuous by their absence. At the conclusion of the trial we found it incumbent on us to pass (on September the 13th, 1915) no less than twenty-four sentences of death: many others of the

accused being sentenced to transportation for life or to lesser terms of imprisonment. The remainder were either discharged in the course of the trial, or were finally acquitted.

In company with this band of desperadoes I and my fellow-Commissioners were destined to pass an abnormally unpleasant Indian 'hot weather'. To begin with, the arrangements for their trial did not serve to put the accused in good humour. Like all followers of their maleficent creed, what they coveted above everything was notoriety; and notoriety would have been obviously the most dangerous thing to allow them. Apart from the fact that there existed in Lahore no court sufficiently large to accommodate such a company along with counsel, police and witnesses, it would have been the height of folly to have conveyed day by day through the public streets that body of desperate men shouting their seditious songs and war-cries.

It had very wisely been decided by Government that the trial should be held in the big Jail at Lahore; and one of the white-washed barrack-rooms was made ready to serve as the court-house. Along one side of the room was constructed a huge dock, the wooden railings of which were sunk deeply into the floor. There was a raised dais for the Commissioners at one end of the apartment, with behind it a small retiring-room. At the other end were rooms for counsel and for offices.

A day or two before proceedings were due to commence I took my two colleagues to inspect the scene of our future labours. We all three regarded dismally the narrow, low-ceilinged, makeshift hall of justice, and wondered what the temperature therein would be in a month's time! My I.C.S. colleague turned to me with a lugubrious twinkle in his eye.

"We start on Monday?" he queried. I replied in the affirmative. He groaned: "Then the funeral will be on Friday!" The Pandit was slightly more optimistic. "It will do all right," he opined, "till the real heat comes *and we all begin to stink!*" Later on, as a matter of fact, the electric fans installed by the Public Works department afforded some alleviation—whenever they chose to function.

On the morning on which the case opened we entered court to confront a surging mob in the dock shouting out of bravado snatches of their revolutionary songs. Someone had provided me with a wretched little tinkling bell under the impression that it would suffice for calling the assembly to order. The good old-fashioned dinner-bell with which I soon had it replaced never failed me.

I harangued the accused briefly in their own language (many of them, of course, had learned to speak the American-English of the Pacific Coast), informing them that though they would experience as just and impartial a trial as we could give them, they must bear in mind that the case was to be heard in a jail where there were large numbers of ordinary prisoners. Any attempt at insubordination, I told them, would be sternly repressed. Knowing full well what might be the outcome of a possible riot in such surroundings, my colleagues and I had decided beforehand to refer any acts of disorder to the Jail Superintendent for punishment as constituting breaches of jail discipline.

For a week or two nothing special occurred to break the daily monotony; and then one day there came trouble. It arose out of an identification parade. According to our procedure, as each witness entered the court he was required to pass along the front of the dock, picking out, if he were able to do so, those

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of the accused against whom he was about to give his testimony. In order to make these parades as fair and trustworthy as possible, we allowed the accused to exchange turbans and improvise alterations in their appearance, with the idea of making the task of identification a difficult one. Still, not unnaturally, these parades were unpopular; and on the day of which I am speaking an angry prisoner bawled at a trembling witness threats regarding his probable fate after leaving the court precincts. Straightway the atmosphere became charged with restlessness, and after reminding the offender of the warning I had given at the beginning of the trial, I sent him with a note to the Jail Superintendent requesting that for the next two days he should attend the court in irons.

This kept things quiet for another week or two; and then one sultry day a worse offence was committed. Whilst another identification prade was in progress an infuriated prisoner began shouting the most scurrilous abuse at the Government Advocate (Mr. C. Bevan-Petman, a barrister) accusing him of having pointed him out to a witness. From where we sat on the dais we could all three watch these parades closely; and we knew the accusation to be utterly false. Shouts began to come from different parts of the dock; there was a surging commotion; and things began to look ugly. So after addressing the offender I sent him to the Superintendent with the request that he should be given the jail punishment of whipping. This punishment is inflicted with a cane on the buttocks.

I need scarcely say that the course I took was utterly repugnant to me. For ten years I had been a Sessions Judge; and in ordinary circumstances the idea that an under-trial prisoner should be whipped could never have entered my head. But the circumstances

were not ordinary; the air was electric, and I was obliged to realise that a big gang of desperadoes were in the dock being tried for their lives in a jail full of convicted prisoners. The sternest measures were necessary in order to prevent the outbreak of a general riot. That was my opinion: and if I had been called upon by higher authority to explain my action, I should simply have put forward the explanation that the trial was no kid-glove affair; and that if exception were taken to my methods, someone else should be put in charge of it and I should be allowed to return to my customary duties. As a matter of fact, there came no criticism from higher authority; and the Lieutenant-Governor, I know, would have understood. There was, however, other very interesting indirect criticism, as I shall soon be relating.

The morning after the trouble we went into court to be confronted with a strike. There was none of the usual jabbering, no snatches of revolutionary song; only an ominous silence. From the sullen crowd Pingle, acting as spokesman, came to the front of the dock and informed us quite respectfully that he and his companions had decided to offer no defence: we might hang the lot of them.

We went on with the trial; and as the accused would not allow their counsel to cross-examine any witnesses, we did the cross-examination ourselves. And after a day or two there happened what we expected to happen. The accused very soon discovered that to deprive themselves of their counsel was a mistake, for besides their work in court they were useful for carrying messages to friends and relations outside. One by one the accused took to questioning witnesses themselves, and then began using their counsel again. So the trial in court came to a conclusion without any further trouble.

And now as regards the indirect criticism of which I have spoken. I received one day a letter from the Indian editor of a rather rabid newspaper, in which he wrote that a terrible rumour was going about to the effect that by the order of our tribunal an under-trial prisoner had been whipped. Surely this could not be true? (He knew quite well, of course, that it was true.) Such a rumour ought to be contradicted: would I give him any information?

I wrote suggesting that he should call on me the following Sunday morning. He came: and I gave him the entire facts from the beginning. He thanked me for the interview and asked whether, if he wrote an account for his paper, I would go through it and see that he had made no mistakes. I consented to do this; and he sent me a very fair account of the interview. I made one or two minor corrections and sent it back to him: *and he never printed a word of it!* Why he did not, I cannot say: but I like to think that he felt that he had been decently treated and that I had had justification for my action.

The monotony of the daily routine was often relieved for judges and accused alike by the production of especially interesting exhibits. For instance, a big trunk seized by the Customs authorities would be opened in court to disgorge a quantity of harmless fancy-ware, pen-trays, and blotting-books. But out of a false bottom would appear a store of pistols, hacksaws and copies of the '*Ghadr*' newspaper. There were also among the exhibits the bombs of various kinds.

A morning spent over such exhibits would always send the accused jabbering interestedly to their midday meal, and would furnish the tribunal with material for discussion during the luncheon hour in our little retiring-room. In that very sultry refectory I would

regale myself on sandwiches and milk and soda; Ellis fed mainly on patent foods and patent medicines; the Pandit, a strict vegetarian, consumed in addition to a plateful of dates a number of oranges, a big bunch of bananas and an entire melon washed down in spite of the intense heat by several cups of very hot and very sweet tea. His diet assuredly agreed with him, for a more genial and painstaking collaborator could not anywhere have been discovered.

It was during one of these hours of relaxation that I received a communication which I regard as a perfect gem of officialdom. It took the form of a letter from the then Registrar of the High Court, who was responsible for supplying the tribunal with stationery. He wrote concerning his anxiety about the consumption of foolscap, pencils and 'Relief' nibs that was taking place: would I look into the matter and report? I am afraid that my reply was not worded with the politeness of a B.B.C. announcer: I said forcibly that I had something rather more important to do than to keep an eye on 'Relief' nibs. Relenting, however, at his evident distress, I added a postscript informing him that those of the accused who could write were allowed pencils and paper for note-making. Further, that I personally broke the back of one 'Relief' nib daily; that Ellis wrecked daily no less than three; while the Pandit contrived to make one nib last him for a week, as one might readily deduce from a sample of his handwriting.

During our four and a half months as jail-birds in this case we were extremely fortunate as regards our health, suffering only from the minor *malaises* inseparable from very hard brainwork in very hot weather. In my case the *malaise* took the form of insomnia. Instead of going to sleep, I would find myself lying under an electric fan exasperatingly

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wakeful, revolving in my mind whether the evidence of Witness X about the revolver in Amritsar were really corroborated by the evidence of Witness Y? I would get up and work for an hour or so at my notes: that was not of the slightest use. Very soon I realised that something would have to be done about this; otherwise I should stand in danger of losing what I once heard a Frenchman call his *belle intelligence*.

I do not know whether there is in Paris a statue of that truly great man, the late Monsieur Jules Verne; but if I were a millionaire I should apply to the President of the French Republic for permission to erect at least three. The novel of those days, though lacking in the sex-appeal and cocktail spirit of the modern novel, was as a panacea for insomnia absolutely useless. I would read a dozen pages and find that I remembered nothing whatever about them except Witness X and his revolver! And then, quite by chance, I found a sovereign remedy.

In the catalogue of a Bombay bookseller I came across a list of the works of that prince of story-tellers, Jules Verne of blessed memory. I had not read one of them since my school days, but the witchery of them once more fastened upon me. In due course there arrived a dozen paper-covered volumes; and thereafter for an hour or two each night I journeyed round the moon, sped on a raft to the molten centre of the globe, plunged twenty thousand leagues under the sea with Captain Nemo. Like a bad dream the Lahore Conspiracy Case fled from my consciousness until the following morning; and after a while I could sleep! I had other help, too; for in spite of the heat my wife came down from Simla, and after court hours dragged me away from my books on to the racecourse.

When at length the statements of witnesses and

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accused along with the arguments of counsel had come to an end, we repaired to the cool heights of Simla to consider and write our judgment. It is not difficult to recall the amazing luxury of that escape from the plains!

In a room littered with formidable piles of documents and law books we set to work, our toil for the first few days being impeded at intervals by the efforts of a visitor in a neighbouring block of our hotel to acquire with indifferent success the melody of "Where my Caravan has Rested". Luckily for us his leave was on the point of expiring, his caravan moved down to the Plains and we had peace.

Our judgment written, we proceeded to Lahore to deliver our sentences in the jail, which for the occasion was guarded by troops. The reason for this was that the jail stood on a tract of land cut to pieces by deep ravines, and the police had heard rumours of a possible massed attack upon the building by bands of malcontents who had not yet been laid by the heels. However, nothing of the kind occurred. The sentences we had been warned to keep most carefully secret; and written out on paper they went down to Lahore on my person. When I pronounced them there were a few shouts of defiance in court—nothing more.

As regards commutations of death sentences and the exercise of clemency I shall have a good deal to say soon. Several petitions for mercy were submitted to the Lieutenant-Governor, who in one case only exercised his powers of clemency. After noting that we had found fifty persons guilty of offences punishable with death, but had only passed twenty-four death sentences, His Honour went on to remark: "It follows that the Tribunal have shown careful discrimination in allotting the sentences, and I can start

with the presumption that in the cases where they have imposed the death penalty they have good reasons for so doing." I may note that in respect of certain of the persons convicted of offences we ourselves had made recommendations to mercy.

As might have been expected, our decision made us recipients of bouquets and targets for mud-slinging. The Indian newspapers, entirely regardless of the evidence, clamoured that twenty-four death sentences justified the accusation against us of having taken part in a "holocaust".

The English papers in India wrote of our 'broad common sense', our 'painstaking care' and our 'thoroughly sane judgment'. They affirmed that no trial in India had ever been conducted with 'greater care and patience on the part of the Bench.' One important paper had a special bouquet for the Punjab authorities for their method of dealing with turbulent returned emigrants: 'Government itself might learn this lesson from Lahore—to adopt a definite policy with regard to sedition, and to stick to it'. Four days after I had pronounced judgment *The Pioneer* of India published this: "Are men whose programme included the wholesale massacre of every loyal subject of His Majesty the King-Emperor fit subjects for clemency?"

On account of what followed the question of clemency is most important.

The Defence of India Act contained two very special mandatory Sections. One of them reserved to the Governor-General in Council and the Local Government the right to exercise clemency. This right, as we have seen, Sir Michael O'Dwyer exercised in respect of one individual.

The other mandatory provision ran as follows:

“The judgment of Commissioners appointed under the Act shall be final and conclusive——”

And again:

“There shall be no appeal from any order or sentence of Commissioners appointed under this Act, and no Court shall have authority to revise any such order or sentence——”

This seemed clear enough: not even a High Court could act as a Court of Appeal and alter sentences after going into the law and the facts of the case.

When, therefore, not long afterwards sixteen of the death sentences were commuted by the Government of India—not on grounds of *clemency*—there was a gasp of astonishment and the Press clamour commenced again. The Government issued in the Press a *communiqué* to the effect that the commutation of death sentences—

“Was not based on any general grounds of clemency, or on any difference of opinion between the Supreme and Local Governments as to the gravity or dangerous nature of the conspiracy, or the heinous character of the acts committed by the accused. . . . The action of the Government of India was taken as the result of the careful examination of *the facts as proved in evidence against each individual prisoner.*”

The italics are mine. It is not surprising that a storm once more burst out in the Press: one important paper pertinently querying whether we Commissioners had been consulted before such ‘wholesale commutation of the sentences that were passed with so much

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emphasis and conviction'? The answer could have been given that we had never been consulted.

Another important paper suggested that the impression would be confirmed that Government had lost its strength, and that it was only necessary to 'whine long enough and loud enough to get any concession.' A third paper asked whether Government had taken this action "with the insane hope of winning over the anarchists?" and went on to add:

"Whatever may have been the intention of the Governor-General in Council the effect of the *communiqué* has been to throw upon the Special Commission the odium of having passed retributive sentences unjustified by the facts."

Naturally, from the native Press there went up a chorus of approval. One paper said that "not merely mercy but justice required that the sentences should be commuted". Another, that "Indian opinion fully supports the clemency (*sic*) shown, not because it benefits the accused, but because it is combined with justice. It is the result arrived at after a re-examination of the facts of the case in a purely judicial frame of mind, and *not on personal grounds*."

Again, the italics are mine. What upset the native Press more than anything else was a lengthy article in the *Morning Post* of London headed 'The Dispensing Power in India'. After reciting the history of the conspiracy and remarking that after a hearing extending over months we had taken six weeks to consider our judgment, that paper inquired whether it could ever have been intended that the power of remission of death sentences "was to constitute the Executive into an extra Court of Revision at the top of the judicial system"?

I do not imagine that the Editor of the *Morning Post* passed a sleepless night because a native newspaper called the article "an audacious attempt to prejudice public opinion in England", and inquired what notice of that paper's conduct would be taken by the Government of India or the Secretary of State?

As a result of all this clamour there came down to Lahore a very high official of the Government of India to have a talk with Sir Michael O'Dwyer, and with myself as President of the Tribunal. I had, of course, discussed with my colleagues our point of view. With the high official I passed quite the most unpleasant hour of my life.

What was suggested was that we Commissioners should agree that Government's action had been justified: and this, as judges, we could not possibly do. To begin with, we had lived with the case for months, we had kept three *dossiers* regarding each accused person, we had taken six weeks to write our judgment of some four hundred printed pages. In addition to this two of us were Sessions Judges with several years' experience; and our colleague was a prominent member of the Lahore Bar. We could not, therefore, believe that the Indian Legal Member of Council and an Indian High Court judge could have been better qualified to decide as to the guilt or innocence of any particular accused than we had been.

But this was a comparatively minor point. There were the Sections of the Act itself—reserving clemency, but saying explicitly that there could be no appeal on the question of facts.

We were judges: not politicians. Had it been considered desirable for political reasons to exercise *clemency* in respect of every single convict, we should have had nothing to say, and we should have said

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nothing. Possibly for political reasons it may sometimes be desirable to do such things for the purpose of placating some party or other. We were not concerned with that. But why create an Act, if its provisions are not to be carried out?

It was put to me that at the time of the passing of the Act a high official had said in a speech that there "would really be two appeals". I knew nothing about such a speech; but if he said this he could only have been referring to the powers of clemency, and was presumably wishing to soothe the Indian *intelligentsia*. We learned afterwards that the very high official of whom I have spoken had been much disappointed at the result of his visit to Lahore.

No information was ever vouchsafed to us as to how we were supposed to have gone wrong in our view of the facts. As judges, I daresay we might have demanded to know this; but we did not wish to stir up further controversy.

None other of the cases tried by us suffered from similar interference.

The finale of the first Lahore Conspiracy Case left me with one regret. It was this: that when so many commutations of sentences were considered necessary, there was none in respect of Vishnu Ganesh Pingle, the young Mahratta Brahman from Poona. Of his guilt there could be no question; but I think that before the end came he had realised that he had been made a dupe by others, and that Englishmen were not the tyrants that he had been led to believe. He was splendidly staunch to his fellow-conspirators, and his behaviour in court earned our respect. In short, revolutionary, bomb-maker, seducer of troops though he had been, Vishnu Ganesh Pingle was essentially a gentleman!

## CHAPTER XIV

WHEN the Conspiracy trials on which I had been engaged came to an end, the Lieutenant-Governor asked me whether I should like to take the furlough which had been due to me when the War commenced.

I gratefully accepted the offer and asked whether I might go to France. Sir Michael laughed and said that he would not stop me, but that I should have to square the Secretary of State, who did not wish Indian officials to go beyond reach of easy recall.

Having some time to wait for a ship to England, my wife and I decided to pay our first visit to Kashmir.

I have not the words to describe it: the gorgeous luxury, after a year of sweat and anxiety in Lahore Jail, of having nothing whatever to do beyond revelling in the mere fact of one's existence!

Kashmir is the veritable lotus-land: and there one leads the lotus-eating existence described by the poet. I can imagine nothing better for a time; life among lakes and rivers, meadows full of flowers, gardens filled with roses, eternal sunshine, snow-capped mountains all around, masses of delicious fruit, fat little kingfishers diving off the roofs of the house-boats!

We were lucky in our house-boat, more fortunate than a lady of our acquaintance who, the first night in hers, was almost eaten alive on the string bedstead supplied with the rest of the boat's furniture. Bitterly she complained to her head Kashmiri boatman, who agreed that there might be "perhaps a few" and by way of remedy sank the bedstead in the river for a couple of hours!

From a kindly Kashmir State official I borrowed a

cherry-orchard on the Dal lake; and thither were poled by our boatmen the house-boat, the servants' boat and the cook-boat along with the small *shikāra* (literally, hunting-boat) equipped with its paddles, the blades of which are shaped like lotus-leaves.

There was room for one more house-boat to tie up to the bank; so there accompanied us our friend Professor Rushbrook Williams, nowadays the guide, philosopher and friend of a dozen Indian potentates. Rushbrook brought with him the abstruse diary of an ancient Dutchman which he was translating, and a rascallion Kashmiri spaniel named 'Jack'. 'Jack's' main idea in life was to save master from drowning; and when master dived into the Dal lake would leap from the *shikāra* on to his shoulders and submerge him 'full fathom five'.

Life on a Kashmir house-boat! One awoke in a warm, pearly dawn to see the glistening lake, Akbar's fort, the 'Throne of Solomon' towering a thousand feet from the valley with its Hindu temple (nothing to do with Solomon, but believed to be a temple to the god Siva) atop. From the *shikāra* one plunged into thirty-feet-deep crystal water, and there followed a mighty breakfast. Then, a few hours under the huge leafy *chenār* trees, snoozing and reading a book. There were big, juicy cherries—not a pound of cherries in a paper bag, but mounds of cherries into which one might dive both hands and gorge!

About midday another bathe seemed desirable. Lunch, and more reading or snoozing. Then one might be paddled along the waterways past ancient temples and flights of steps where pretty Kashmiri girls were washing their garments to Srinagar, the Maharaja of Kashmir's capital, for tennis and cocktails at the Club. Or friends might come out for mixed-bathing parties on the lake. Or one might go fishing

for lake fish (trout fishing being strictly preserved), using for bait dough mixed with cotton-wool till the time of ripe mulberries came. Or again, there might be picnics in one of the lovely gardens. Are there any gardens in the world to rival them, with their spreading *chenārs*, multitudes of roses and crystal hill-streams cascading and sliding down the marble water-channels; and beyond, the ruffled loveliness of the lake? If you wished to see fresh loveliness, you simply gave an order and the boatmen poled you away elsewhere while you were having early morning tea.

At that time the Maharaja was His Highness Major-General Sir Partab Singh. He was an old-fashioned prince who when he came from his residence in Jammu to his summer capital of Srinagar, and his flotilla was met by the British Resident's state barge manned by fifty rowers dressed in scarlet, would not enter his palace on the river till his astrologers had announced the auspicious moment.

He was an enthusiast for cricket, and his cricket matches were worth watching. Smoking his hookah, he would sit watching the game until he felt inclined to take a hand. Then one of the batsmen would promptly get himself out, and in would go the Maharaja. He would bang the ball lustily, with someone to run for him, and the number of runs he was to make had been arranged—say, fifty. A fielder would fumble the ball, then sling it at the wicket-keeper who would let it pass through his legs. In due course the fifty runs would be compiled, and amid loud applause H.H. would resume his hookah.

Like most oriental potentates, he was a great stickler for etiquette, and the late Bishop Lefroy used to tell an amusing story against himself. He had come up from Lahore for a holiday, and being on a

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walking tour called at the palace in a rough tweed suit. The Maharaja received him courteously, and for about an hour the worthy Bishop held forth about the subject nearest his heart, Christian missions. The Maharaja said never a word, and the Bishop, satisfied that he had made a great impression, rose to go. The old prince leaned forward and asked him somewhat stiffly: "*Ap ke pās frāk kōt nahin hai?*"—which, being translated, means: "Haven't you got such a thing as a frock coat?"

When it began to grow too hot on the lake, we went higher up the hills to Gulmarg (literally, the Meadow of Flowers). This meant exchanging one scene of beauty for another. From Gulmarg one sees snowy ranges, with now and then the great peak of Nanga Parbat emerging above them from its mists. One can view spread out the whole vale of Kashmir, and there are masses of flowers, soft green turf for the golf course and forests of silver fir, blue pine and maple. And if one wishes to see the Dal lake covered with pink lotus in July and August, it is an easy journey by car.

Like everyone else we leased a "hut" to live in. These Kashmir huts suit very well the picnicking life, and many of them are more or less water-tight when it rains. Some of the agents who have the letting of them have their own ideas as to the correctness of an inventory, and much of a hut's contents is ramshackle. Hence these doggerel verses of mine. For the benefit of the uninitiated I may explain that a *chaukidar* is a watchman or caretaker; curry *bhāt* means curry and rice; the 'C.M.G.' means the 'Civil and Military Gazette' and a *deychi* is a kitchen utensil.

"In Xanadu did Kubla Khan  
A stately Pleasure-Dome decree"—

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But that is not the kind of dome  
My Kashmir agent's let to me!  
No "Alph, the sacred river" runs  
Through odorous realms of deodar:  
A humble stream flows past the hut  
Of "Alf", our unclean *chaukidar*!

No doubt the worthy Kubla Khan  
Had spacious divans—two or more—  
Which did not break beneath his bulk  
And land him harshly on the floor:  
Whereas, the chair on which I sit  
Is built on quite a different plan;  
And would have, probably, been scrapped  
By kingly Mr. Kubla Khan!

When Kubla K. sat down to feast  
On gems of culinary art,  
He had *one* decent fork at least  
To help him eat his "curry *bhāt*".  
My inventory mentions "Forks",  
(In number "seven"—no extra cost);  
But I observe with grief a note  
That "six are missing: four are lost."

When old man K. required a light  
To help him read his "C.M.G.",  
A thousand scented torches bright  
The sylph-like Houris lit with glee.  
My lamps within a murky room  
Emitting each a smoke-like fog,  
Their chimneys broken, share the shelves  
With *degchis* suited to a dog!

Next year, if Government should spring  
That rise in pay we've heard of long,

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I'll write a line to old K.K.  
And say I hope he's going strong,  
And will he lease his Pleasure Dome  
With Houris or Electric Plant?—  
And let us hope that Kubla Khan  
Will not reply that Kubla *can't*!

Before leaving Gulmarg my wife, Rushbrook and I climbed Aphawat (13,000 feet above sea-level) which towers above the little valley. The only casualty was our precious bottle of beer, which imitating the Gadarene swine rushed violently down a steep place and shattered itself on a snow-covered rock.

Whilst I was in Kashmir I began to get letters and afterwards field-postcards which gave me great pleasure. They came from a Man who had Made Good. He had once been a sergeant in a regiment, and had served two small sentences for forgery. When he appeared before me in Lahore it seemed to me that a deterrent sentence would be best for him, and I sentenced him to two years rigorous imprisonment. After he had served about a year of it, the Jail Superintendent asked me whether, as the prisoner had been of good character and was ill and was anxious to serve in France, I would support an application for a remission of the rest of the sentence. The remission was granted, and while the man smoked a cigar with me after his release he told me that my sentence had been a "sickener". We raised a small fund for him and wrote to the Bombay police to see him on board a ship for England. He joined up; he did well in France; and the last time I saw him he was doing well. I do not believe in a succession of trumpery sentences.

It was very hot indeed when at length my wife

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and I, with two dogs and a cat, embarked at Bombay. The worst part of the journey was when we reached the region of submarines and were plunged in Cimmerian gloom at nightfall, not being allowed to light even a match on deck.

Among men on the boat who had served in France and Mespot I felt very much a worm! After all, I had started my career as a soldier; and here I was a miserable civilian! I confess that I envied the 'Aussies' swimming about stark naked in the Suez Canal. True, at the time they were not doing much—but they were in the War. When we neared Marseilles and fellow-passengers donned khaki, I felt worse.

At Boulogne we just caught a leave-boat, the cat being handed up in his box at the last moment by an old French woman—God bless her! Everyone except myself seemed to be in khaki.

At the War Office I was referred to the India Office; and there I found an old friend, Lieutenant-Colonel Sir James Dunlop Smith. He belonged to the Punjab Commission, had been the beloved Private Secretary of Lord Minto and had become Political A.D.C. to the Secretary of State for India. With a twinkle in his eye he suggested that I should apply for 'permission to do war work'. I did so; and soon afterwards received a letter from an under secretary conveying permission. So I reported to the War Office that I had fixed matters satisfactorily.

On November the 4th of 1916 I received a War Office telegram warning me to prepare to go to France. I felt as important as Haig, and had been much luckier than a friend of mine (also on furlough) who, though keen to serve in France, had been sent about England buying wool! He told me that there appeared to be some forty-nine kinds of wool, and that he did not know any of them. I had been in France for about

a fortnight when the under secretary wrote, inquiring whether I had yet found any 'war work'. I wrote and told him where I was, and back came a letter demanding to know what I meant by going there without the knowledge of the Secretary of State? I replied very diplomatically that I had imagined that his first letter was sufficient sanction—and I never heard any more of the matter.

On reaching Southampton I realised how very unimportant I was. A young and yawning officer on the quay told me that a boat would be leaving in half an hour for Havre; but would I not rather go the next day?

The next night I found that by virtue of my rank as Major I was in command of some twelve hundred men proceeding to Havre. I had a cabin to myself, but no sleep because the men sang all the way across. At Havre I shed my brief command; and a youth in a shanty gave me a scrap of paper directing me to join the Indian Cavalry Advanced Base Dépôt at Rouen.

A train for Rouen made ready to depart, and summoning up my best French, I inquired from a dapper little man with a pointed beard whether I might share his carriage? He was wearing rather queer uniform with a row of medal-ribbons which I did not recognise. I took him for one of our gallant allies; and was surprised when he answered me in French far worse than mine. Then I discovered that he was a distinguished Harley Street surgeon who was touring the hospitals. His medal-ribbons belonged to civil decorations. When he got out he was replaced by a most affable French civilian who seemed very interested in the Indian troops, and I told him quite a lot about them. I hope that he reported all I told him to his employers, because my information was as incorrect as I could make it! I gave him the impression

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that on account of their discomfort the Indian troops were in a state bordering on mutiny.

At Rouen I was dropped off an Army lorry into a bog which had once been the Rouen racecourse. Again I found how unimportant I was in the World War; for those in authority at the Indian Cavalry camp had not even been apprised of my advent. However, a telegram or two put that right.

I was allotted a hut to share with a good fellow of the I.C.S., and was taken on to hear a Lena Ashwell concert party. I learned that the Indian camp was commanded by my old friend, Colonel Henry Templer; and here I would digress for a moment to say a few words about a young hero.

When I had first known the Templers in Simla some twenty years before, there had burst into their drawing-room a small boy in a large hat. His mother said: "Claude, what do gentlemen do when they come into a room where there are ladies?" Master Claude answered in one breath: 'Take their hats off don't they may I have a piece of cake?'

Under the auspices of the War Office there was issued in 1921 a pamphlet entitled: "Behind the German lines." It was issued "to assist C.O.'s and other officers in lecturing to their men on Citizenship, for it records a splendid example of courage, self-sacrifice and determination." It records the exploits of young Claude Templer, a Captain in the 1st Battalion of the Gloucestershire Regiment.

In December of 1914 when leading his platoon he was badly wounded and taken prisoner. In various prison camps he was brutally treated.

In April 1915 came his first attempt at escape along with Russian officers led by a Colonel who had been one of the garrison at Port Arthur.

Templer had a thorough knowledge of German;

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and his various attempts at escape make thrilling reading. After three years of captivity, on the tenth night of his *thirteenth* attempt he reached Holland.

Back once more in England, he was presented to the King. He refused Home employment, rejoined his regiment in France, and was killed in action a few months before the Armistice. In Rye church and in the new chapel of the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, there are memorials to his memory.

There was nothing exciting about Rouen. I lectured to British troops about India; and one day we were all turned out in the woods to hunt for nine Australians who had broken out of a detention camp. Naturally we never saw a sign of them, though I dare say they were sitting somewhere in the under-growth laughing at us. Two of them later on were brought back by the French from near the Spanish border.

Our recreations included going to the Hôtel de la Poste, where the Brass Hats resided, to buy a sliver of pink soap and have a hot bath unobtainable in our bog. There was besides an excellent English club for officers; but the fact that French officers were not admitted to it was in my opinion the silliest possible mistake.

One amusing episode in the Indian Cavalry camp was the absconding of an Indian camp cook. He had become sick of the War and wandered into the woods to become, so he said, a fakir. After suitable punishment he resumed his culinary duties.

Probably he did not know in the least what the War was about; but he knew more of its realities than did a Burmese servant who told a friend of mine his idea of the *Emden*.

The *Emden* was the German cruiser which, under its gallant commander Von Müller, frightened Madras,

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did much damage to our shipping and was eventually destroyed at North Keeling Island.

The Burmese think in 'seasons', and according to the idea of the servant, who had heard vaguely of submarines and aeroplanes, the *Emden* travelled for four months of the year on the surface, for four months under water and for four months in the air.

By reason of the cold and the damp, I suppose, I was suddenly knocked out by a severe dose of influenza and found myself journeying in an ambulance to No. 2 Red Cross Hospital. There I received so much kindly attention that I began to feel like the Tommy in the South African War who, overwhelmed by the ministrations of well-meaning ladies, affixed to the end of his cot a placard: "Too sick today to be nussed." When we patients became convalescent we were let out for walks in a garden at the back of the Bishop's palace, and marched up and down in company with a number of very damp sea-gulls.

Not wishing my wife, who was working as a V.A.D. in a War hospital at Rye, to know anything about this, I had gone on describing in my letters the architectural beauties of Rouen and so forth; and one morning the chuckling Matron brought me a telegram demanding to know how I was? My wife had been informed from the War Office that I was in No. 2 Red Cross suffering from 'pyrexia of uncertain origin'. It was only the old P.U.O. stunt meaning that one had a temperature; but it had sounded pretty deadly, and the young assistant at the local surgery had been unable to explain what pyrexia meant.

Whilst in hospital I received instructions to join a certain well-known Line regiment; but by the time I came out these had been altered. The Adjutant responsible for the Indian troops sent for me and told me that my old friend "Jimmy" Shea (now

General Sir John Shea, G.C.B.) had applied for me, and that I was to go to H.Q. 30th Division as his A.D.C. and general handyman. Complete with red tabs I pushed off.

My departure from Rouen was undignified.

Another man and I patched up the broken windows of a railway carriage with paper, for it was bitterly cold and our rail-head was at Doullens. We had some stump-ends of candles and a huge paper bag of food. Kind-hearted ladies came out of the canteen and waved handkerchiefs and wished us luck. The train moved some fifty yards out of the station—and there we remained for two hours while other trains went by!

I found "Jimmy" and some of his Staff located in a funny little old house in a funny little village with guns banging all around. Our padre, by the way, was Canon Linton Smith, now a Bishop. Here came a stroke of luck for me, for "Jimmy", having been ill, was to have a few days' leave in England before the coming Arras battles, and I was to go with him!

In England I saw something of an old friend, the latter part of whose life was truly a tragedy. He was Monsieur Nabokoff, then *chargé d'affaires* at the Russian Embassy in London. We had known 'Nabby' well as Russian Imperial Consul-General in Simla; but when he lunched with us one day at the Ritz he told me that he was really acting as Ambassador, the new Ambassador being still in Russia on account of grave events which were expected. He could tell me no more; but ten days later came the abdication of the Tsar, and the Russian Revolution.

My next meeting with 'Nabby' was in 1923 after I had retired. His estates had been confiscated, and he was eking out a living in a squalid apartment in Lisson Grove, teaching Russian and occasionally getting translation work. I got him to come to

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dinner, filled him with champagne and old brandy, and for one evening he became his old self. But his trials had broken him, and he soon passed on.

The night before I returned to France I had just finished dinner at the Charing Cross Hotel when to my surprise a waiter brought me a menu card. On the back of it was a capital pencil drawing about the 'Better 'Ole', and a few tables distant sat young Bruce Bairnsfather grinning at me.

Soon after our return came the first Arras battle. The 30th Division covered itself with glory, and 'Bull' Allenby (our Army Commander) came along to grasp us all by the hand. We also got a fine 'chit' from our Corps Commander, Lieut. General Sir Ivor Maxse. During this period I acquired my only war 'disability', a broken ankle snapped in a mud-hole in the devastated village of Agny. My horse 'Tommy' was nearer to death than I was, for a shell-splinter took a chip out of his back just behind the saddle.

Fortunately for me I was at the time in the bowels of an old Boche dug-out making notes at a conference of generals. About this dug-out I have three recollections: the cheery imperturbability of my friend "Jimmy" in the face of difficulties; a hideous oil-painting hanging on a wall; and the knowledge of how deeply a tired-out man can slumber. The painting, evidently looted from some village, portrayed an extremely ugly old woman. Had the Boche hung it there by way of a joke, or because it resembled his old mother? Descending into the bowels of the earth I had bumped into some heavy body, which rolled down several steps and came to rest. I had known much about insomnia in the past, but until then had never known how deep sleep could be. The man was a 'runner' who had spent the night ploughing through the mud, and until he was wanted again was

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taking a little rest. Rolling down a few steps was not going to wake him!

During the second Arras battle I saw two unforgettable sights. One was an attack on our observation balloons by a Boche airman, with our shrapnel bursting all round him and our planes racing up from behind. Both balloons came down in flames, one empty; from the other one man came safely down by parachute, but his companion seemed to fall through his parachute, and the dread message had to go to sorrowing folk in England.

The other sight I saw from the top of Blaireville quarry, where we were living in the snow. Very early on a grey drizzling morning I climbed to the top of the quarry, and while our own guns went on thundering I could hear the distant thunder and see the flash of guns to my left front. It was the Canadians storming Vimy Ridge, and at the time I did not realise how magnificent was that exploit.

It was in this quarry that I met General Geoffrey White, who commanded the 30th Division Artillery. Very many people know of him as a great coaching authority and skilled driver of four-in-hands; but I have pencil sketches by him of men and horses which I value. Like 'B.P.' he was ambidextrous as an artist; and after making a sketch would take a pencil in each hand and sign his name forwards and backwards at the same time.

Neuville Vitasse was my last camp; and while we were there the shells were passing overhead to knock down further chunks of poor old Arras in our rear. We heard that the inhabitants were selling priceless china and furniture for a mere song—not of much use to anyone when it was impossible for the purchaser to carry them away.

But my time in France was coming to an end.

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After all, I was only an adventurer on furlough from India, and thither I had to return. Later on several of us in the Punjab Commission volunteered for Mespot, but we were never required.

My friend "Jimmy" went out to Palestine to be one of Allenby's big men there, and when in command of the 60th Division took the surrender of Jerusalem.

One of my recollections of my time with him in France is our war poem which so far has not been included in any of the anthologies. It was composed the night before one of the Arras battles. All his arrangements had been completed, and as neither of us felt ready to slumber we sat for an hour in an Army hut and courted the Muse. The theme was the ridiculous *canard* current in the Press that the Huns were boiling down corpses to obtain fat and fertilisers. There were a good many verses; but I shall let the reader off with four:

We plough the fields and scatter  
Our grandma o'er the land;  
While grandpa yields the essence  
To grease the driving-band.

Our little Peter's infant limbs  
In stew-pot can be seen;  
And 'mid the hate of Hunnish hymns  
Will oil the submarine.

Old Uncle Bill his aged bones  
Will shortly render up;  
While Aunt Bedelia Susan Jones  
Will do her bit for Krupp.

All skeletons from cupboards mean  
We'll lug out with a will,

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And turn them into brilliantine  
To smarten Kaiser Bill.

After my return to India I was able to do something by raising funds to help the work of those two splendid women, the 'Women of the Cellar-House' at Pervyse. I have some letters and a big portrait signed by them both: Baroness ('Gipsy') de T'Serclaes and Mairi Chisholm. Nearly four years they spent in a Belgian front-line dug-out, and once were buried for three-quarters of an hour before they could be rescued—'gassed!'

## CHAPTER XV

I HAVE always been interested in the humour of the soldier. In this chapter I present some examples of it taken from my notebooks, endeavouring to avoid the repetition of well-known 'chestnuts'.

The main charm of the soldier's humour lies in its spontaneity. There is nothing laboured about it; there are no carefully thought-out quips; and when the soldier-man exercises his wit his jests, though they convey a very shrewd appreciation of men and things, are such as rarely leave a sting.

The soldier sees most matters in a quaint light. *Le mot juste* comes readily to his tongue. He has the gift of expressing what strikes him as amusing in a concise sentence which at once appeals to his hearers as the most apt remark that could have been made.

Undoubtedly this great gift of humour has done much to sustain the soldier's unvarying cheerfulness under the most adverse circumstances. Every company in every regiment possesses one or more licensed jesters; and many an officer could tell how often a hidden inspiration on the part of the company Mark Twain or Mark Tapley has helped him and the company through an unpleasant situation.

The Atkins who several years ago, standing in a crowd to watch some volunteers march past, delivered himself of the sententious remark: "Thank Gawd for the Navy!" was a wit; and my collection includes two more examples dating from the time when Lord Haldane was Secretary of State for War. It was *consule* Haldane that the idea originated of granting twopence a day extra pay to men who succeeded in passing a shooting test; and on one occasion a Tommy,

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who had hitherto failed to pass, had got close enough to the required score to need only an "outer" in order to attain to the coveted rank. He fired his last shot, and—the hateful shriek was heard of a *ricochet* speeding on its way! "There goes my little tuppence," he remarked more in sorrow than in anger as he rose from the ground, "'oppin', 'oppin', 'oppin' all the way to 'ell!" The corollary to this anecdote is the story of the first-class shot who, having rapidly put on a succession of "bulls", arose, wiped his knees, blew the smoke out of his rifle, and observed complacently: "Mister 'Aldane—loses!"

During the South African War the mounted infantry at first came in for a certain amount of good-natured chaff; and probably the most sarcastic remark made about one of their number was the answer to a question concerning one "Nobby Clark's" powers as an equestrian. "Can 'e ride?" was the answer: "why 'e couldn't ride in a railway carriage with the door shut!"—"Put old Nobby on a 'orse," continued his detractor, "and 'e'd 'ave no more chance than a flea in 'Yde Park."

From the same period dates the story of the smart young staff officer who rode up to a party of dusty warriors weary with "foot slogging" many miles over the Veldt with the query: "Are you West Riding?" "No, me Lord," came a cheery voice from the rear, "we ain't! We're the blinkin' Buffs—walkin'!"

From the Indian frontier came the news item sent to a newspaper at a time when the well-known *Mullah* Syed Akbar was making a particular nuisance of himself. It ran: "The Rev'd S.A.K. Bar's mule bolted with him into the hills at the sound of the firing: since which nothing has been heard of the reverend gentleman."

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One of the strangest requests ever made to me was that of a braw Scot, piper at a St. Andrew's Dinner in Lahore, at which I had the honour of being chairman. On such occasions it is usual to refresh the musicians with occasional tots of usquebaugh; and the piper in question explained that, as his brother performer was by persuasion a "Pussyfoot", he should only be regaled during the evening with "some temperance drink, such as port".

There is a good story concerning General Sir O'Moore Creagh (afterwards Commander-in-Chief) when a Moplah regiment had the honour of being inspected by his late Majesty, King George V., during his Indian tour as Prince of Wales.

The day was very hot, and the General's temper was not at its brightest, so, much to the Prince's amusement, the following dialogue took place:

"Aren't they rather like Soudanese?"

"No, begorra, a Soudanese would eat a regiment of them!"

"Don't they ever get sunstroke with those small caps?"

"No, begorra, I wish they would!"

Another story of a somewhat short-tempered officer is that of the Colonel to whom a youthful subaltern, acting as A.D.C. to his father the General, communicated an order: "Please, sir, father says will you take your regiment over there?" The Colonel turned towards him an empurpled visage, and barked out: "Oh, does he? And what does mother say?"

As illustrative of Atkins' readiness of reply may be related a scrap of conversation between two men stretched on the ground at the end of a field-day. It was a Monday, and presumably in the mind of the first speaker there still lingered fragments of the scriptural language he had heard in church the

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previous day, for he suddenly observed: "And the Lord said unto Moses 'Arf right turn '!" Without a moment's hesitation his pal lying next him added: "And Moses, not knowin' 'is drill, turned 'arf left!"

The Coronation Durbar at Delhi furnished one gem for my collection. His Majesty being present in person, the Viceroy occupied a lowlier position than was usual in ceremonial functions. "Ar," murmured a Tommy, as the procession passed slowly through the lines of troops standing at the present, "Ar, we used ter know them 'Ardinges—onst!"

Atkins, being the best-hearted fellow in the world, is always anxious to hearten any one in affliction. Outside the Pasteur Institute at Kasauli in the north of India may be seen at midday a motley crowd of persons waiting to be inoculated against rabies from the bites of dogs, jackals, and the like. On one occasion the new arrivals included an officer who seemed anything but comfortable as to the effect the inoculations might have on him; and to him spake a Tommy with words of cheer. "Don't you worry, sir!" he said. "This inoculation ain't anythink! Why, *a friend o' mine bit me*; and I said it was a dog; and I've been 'avin' a 'oliday 'ere for a week!"

The scene of the next little yarn was an Indian up-country railway-station, where amid the jostling crowd of Indians an English official saw to his regret upon the platform a corporal and a private of a certain regiment somewhat the worse for liquor and inclined to be noisy. Close by on a bench, taking no notice whatever, sat two more men of the same regiment looking as quiet and respectable as it was possible for men to be.

"Can't you get hold of those noisy comrades of yours, and keep them quiet?" asked the official; and the reply was: "Very sorry, sir, but we can't do

nothing." "But it will bring discredit on the regiment," he persisted; "why can't you do anything?" Then came the amazing answer: "Beg pardon, sir, but yer see it's like this. *We're two loo-natics, and them's the escort.*"

India suffers a good deal from the amateur actor; but Tommy at a "Gaff" is usually very kind to him or her (especially her) except when the performance is so distressingly bad as to make him regret his eight annas wasted on a seat. The present writer remembers a musical show at which a lady, very much in the sere and yellow, with a voice like a cracked tin-kettle, burst forth into Gilbert and Sullivan's

· "At last, I am a bride . . ."

and a sympathetic voice from the gallery remarked: "At last, old gal!" At another "Gaff", when a dismal play was dragging to its very bitter end, the feelings of an entire audience were expressed by an individual who arose with a clatter of ammunition boots at the back of the auditorium, and ejaculated wearily:—"Well, good-night all!"

When utterly bored by such well-meant dramatic efforts, Tommy sometimes relieves his feelings by pulling the legs of his mates: as in the case of the spectator who suddenly called out: "Well I'm off 'ome. Who'll 'ave a glars with me?" Great enthusiasm on the part of the audience!—which changed into something else, as the voice of the retreating philanthropist floated back:—"Glars o' milk!"

Gallipoli yields one example. Hearing a comrade boast of the extremely quick passage he had made, the listener quietly remarked: "Ar! the Mediterranean runs down'ill—so I've 'eard."

Most of my Near East stories, collected during the

war, are probably too well known to bear repetition; but we may note the injunction of Mr. Atkins to a gang of reluctant prisoners whom he was escorting: "You believes in the Sheikh of Mohamerah. Well, I believes in the *shake of lakri* (stick)—so come along!" And there is the comment of the disgusted gentleman who observed: "Well, if this 'ere's the Garden of Eden, no wonder the Twelve Apostles got themselves flung out of it!"

Taking a passing glance at Egypt on the way to France, we have the story of the subaltern at a well-known hotel. Noticing a telephone-receiver off its hook, he picked it up out of idle curiosity, and was delighted to recognise the voice of a great "Brass Hat" at the other end of Cairo demanding angrily instant information as to the whereabouts of one Captain Brown. Very politely, the subaltern spoke into the telephone: "If you will wait for a moment, sir, I will inquire;" and taking a seat pursued for a space his studies of the French language through the medium of *La Vie*. When he took up the receiver again, a voice as of one in torment was raging: "Hullo! where is Captain Brown? *Where the devil is he?* Here have I been calling for the last half-hour . . ." With extreme politeness spoke the subaltern: "Captain Brown at present, sir, is out in the garden shampooing the goat. Good-morning!"—and rang off.

Coming to France—the B.E.F. was prolific in the production of examples of Tommy's peculiar humour. One story concerns a Divisional General who was a particularly early bird in the matter of his inspections. His predecessor had been accustomed to take a look at the remounts occasionally after breakfast; and the arrival of the "new broom" at 6 Ack Emma was followed by considerable "strafing" because things were not ready for him. His departure was welcomed

by all ranks; and a burly trooper summed up his impressions in the following words of scorn: "Im a Divisional General! Why, lumme, 'e oughtn't to command not even a regiment, nor nothink! All 'e's fit for is to be a blinkin' mushroom picker!"

Tommy and Jock held no very high opinion of the wines of sunny France; and it is related of a stalwart Highlander that after a draught of *vin ordinaire* he returned the bottle to its owner, a friendly *poilu*, with the remark: "Weel, thank ye for the drappie—but it's for a' the worrld like washin' yer innards wi' salad-dressin'!" A very similar opinion was held by a mossy old warrior in a Labour Battalion who was called on to explain his reasons for helping himself and his friends from a barrel of white wine, the property of our gallant French Allies.

"Beg your pardon, sir," ran his speech for the defence, "but yer see, it was a very 'ot day; and *at first* we quite thought it was water."

Going round the trenches with a General given to asking questions was a good method of adding to one's store of anecdotes.

"What would you do," asked the General of a sentry, "if you saw thirty Germans coming over that rise?"

"Wot should I do?" was the reply, "why, 'oller!"

Sometimes one met in the trenches a man who before joining up had trod the boards of small provincial theatres; and it was such a one who after a highly theatrical description of the ground to his front concluded (giving a dramatic sweep of the arm over the trench in which he and his fellow troglodytes were dwelling in the mire) with these words: "And these, sir, I am led to believe, are the British lines!"

On another occasion a General came upon a sentry who had obviously just scuttled back to his post. The

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sentry was very muddy and sodden with rain, and he had a drip on the end of his nose. The following dialogue took place:

*General:* "Did you leave your post just now?"

*Sentry:* "Yes, sir—only for a minute."

*General:* "Oh. Was it properly guarded during your absence?"

*Sentry:* "Yes, sir"—(pointing to another object sitting in the mud of the fire-step, also with a drip on the end of his nose)—"by that gentleman there."

The digging of trenches is not a very enlivening pursuit; but some people seemed able to extract amusement from it. For instance, the burly Atkins who in the middle of his own delving exhorted his companions to take note of the exertions of little Jimmy, his own great chum, a bantam of a man with a stout heart. "Look at little Jimmy!" he cried. "Ain't he a fine figure of a man? Why, you can see the muscles a-swellin' on 'im like the knee-caps on a sparrer!"

Wounds, cold, hunger and want of sleep were powerless to depress such men. When the—th Division was moving to fresh quarters, the Graves Registration officer was detailed as knowing the road to lead the way to the next camp. That worthy, however, proved an indifferent guide in the wet darkness of an April night; and the Division wandered about in the mud for some hours. At a time when it appeared probable that the road was irretrievably lost for the night, and when prospects of food and rest seemed remote, a voice was heard plaintively inquiring in the gloom: "Who's leadin' this Division?"—and the men rocked with laughter when another voice answered in mock solemn tones: "'Im wot buries the dead."

My next three stories were probably invented by way of jest. One concerns the Atkins who was discovered shouting at the top of his voice whilst he

danced about with a bayonet in front of a particularly corpulent Hun.

"I was callin' old Bill, sir," the kind-hearted fellow explained. "Old Bill, 'e ain't stuck one yet."

A grim humour pervades the story about the German spy sentenced to be shot, who had to walk some distance to the place where the sentence was to be carried out. It was a cold rainy morning; and the German grumbled considerably at having to walk so far. His escort bore with him for some time; but at last, wearied by the prisoner's interminable (and, as it seemed, unreasonable) complaints about the weather, one of them burst out with: "Ere, wot 'ave you got to grouse about? *We've got to walk back!*"

The third story is that of the seven Tommies who after a raid returned with only six prisoners. The absence of the seventh prisoner was accounted for thus: "On the way back, sir, we got talkin'; and 'e told me 'ow 'e'd got an old mother, and I said as 'ow I'd got an old mother too. Then 'e told me about 'is little boy of five; and I said as 'ow I'd got a little boy of five. Then 'e started tellin' me about 'is little farm, and—well, sir, *'e made me feel so miserable that I shot 'im!*"

Censoring of letters naturally provided a few gems: "I am sending you ten shillings. But not this month." "Please find enclosed a pound note. I can't." And, of course, there was the little joke of certain subalterns in the early stages of the war, who took to sending to their tailors Service post-cards with all the lettering scratched out except the words: "I have not heard from you lately."

In a letter written from a particularly pestilential bog of a camp an incurable optimist wrote: "There is always some excitement here—even if it's only going over your shirt"; whilst another informed his sweet-

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heart that "there were trucks for 'Ommes' and trucks for 'Chevoos', which means men and horses in French. I went in one of the 'Ommes' trucks; but we was packed so close we hadn't even room to change our minds".

No one, unfortunately, has preserved for us the comments of the warrior who did a lengthy march in a pair of new socks sent him by an anonymous benefactor. When he had at last got them off and examined the appalling blister which had developed, he discovered that his agony had been caused by a small hard knob at the extremity of one of the toes. It proved to be a wad of paper on which loving fingers had printed: "God bless the wearer of these socks!"

Tommy's powers of description are sometimes picturesque. Asked how he felt during his first experience of a barrage with the ground quivering under him, his answer was: "It's like bein' on a bit of 'ot fat! Enough ter make yer blood stand on end!"

An amusing telephone story was once told the present writer by an officer who bore the name of Coffin. For some time he had worked away at the instrument: "Hallo! Hallo!—What?—It's Coffin speaking. What?—I say, I'm Coffin—I'm COFFIN!" At last from the bowels of the earth there issued a voice: "Ho! *coughin'*, are yer? Well, I'm larfin'!"

It is related that on one occasion in France the Chief inquired from an astonished soldier whether he was aware that he was the left-hand man of the extreme left of the British Line? This interesting piece of information left the man singularly unimpressed; and later on a sergeant took upon himself to explain: "You 'eard what 'Aig said? Well, it means that if 'e gave the order '*Left Wheel*', you'd go on markin' time for the rest of yer blinkin' life."

Atkins carried his humour with him into the

hospitals. In one of them the ward humorist used to go through the following performance, which though it never varied never failed to bring down the house. Seated upon his bed with a penny stuck in his eye by way of an eyeglass, he would impersonate a pompous visitor to the hospital. "And where did the *pore* bullet 'it you, me man?" he would inquire; and then came the reply in the husky whisper of a sufferer, "Well, sir, yer see, it was like this. The bullet 'it me in the 'ead; but the bandage slipped, and now it's round me ankle."

A story which I hope is not too much of a "chestnut" concerns the stout-hearted, but somewhat inebriated Cockney who interviewed a Recruiting Officer.

"Splendid!" said the officer. "Now you go home and have a nice cup of tea and come again to-morrow morning."

"You won't take me now?"

"Not in that state," said the officer impatiently. "Come again to-morrow."

"Oh, orlright, orlright!" said the inebriated one, as he lurched through the doorway. "Orlright, *lose the blurry war!*"

I have my own recollection of how in November of 1916 I stood with others on the deck of a "butterfly boat" bound for Havre. By way of farewell to us came a stentorian voice bawling from the darkness of the quayside as to adventurers setting forth for far Cathay:

"Hoy!" it shouted, "bring us back a parrot!"

## CHAPTER XVI

WHEN towards the end of 1917 I returned to India, Mr. Edwin Montagu and his party were our fellow-passengers for part of the voyage.

He was then Secretary of State for India; and was going out to consult the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, about his Reforms scheme. I saw a good deal of him, because he was anxious to know about my revolutionary Sikhs. But he was too suave for my liking; one seemed to feel that much of his listening was done out of politeness. Doubtless he was revolving his plans for stirring the Indian masses out of their 'pathetic contentment'—an unfortunate phrase, for many people might think contentment an enviable state of existence.

When in 1922, out of office, he complained that he had been 'thrown to the wolves', he might have reflected that before this happened he himself had furnished the wolves with fare, including in it General Dyer.

I have sometimes been struck with the influence that names beginning with 'M' have had on India's destinies. There was Lord Macaulay with his exotic system of education; there were the Morley-Minto Reforms and the Montagu Reforms. I could mention four other 'M's', quite well-known Indian administrators who, meaning well, have helped to weaken our rule in India; but I have no desire to be involved in libel actions.

On my return I learned that I was to be Sessions Judge at Ambala, a very pleasant appointment since it gave me Simla for part of the year.

Simla I found laughing over a *mot* of the Com-

mander-in-Chief, General Sir Charles Monro. A member of the I.C.S. who had been an enthusiastic peace-time soldier, had been given a job in the military offices when the supply of regular officers had run short. He had prepared for the Chief a minute on some subject, and had written it in his best Secretariat English with an occasional Latin quotation. It ended with the words '*Cadit quaestio*', which being freely translated mean '*That's that*' or '*Nuff said*'. The Chief had read through the minute, and had then added his own comment in the margin:

"I know some Latin too. *Nil sanguineum bonum.*"

Among interesting people whom the War had transported to India was Kenneth Barnes, brother of those two delightful actresses the Vanbrughs, who for several years has been head of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. I had the honour of appearing with him in a short play in which he taught me how to "hawk and spit" like a French revolutionary; and a very clever wordless war-play of his was performed in Simla, which was probably only stopped from being a London success by reason of the Armistice.

Several of us had been much exercised about the difficulty in getting our wives back from England to India, and I went to see my friend, the late Sir Hamilton Grant, then Foreign Secretary, about the matter. 'Tony' assured me that the Government of India were doing all they could, and that the trouble lay with the India Office. Pulling open a drawer he took out a file on which were gummed the letters of indignant husbands which were appearing in various newspapers. These, he said, were sent home to the India Office every week. He was amused when I told him that I did not need to read them, as I had written half of them myself under pseudonyms such as 'Grass-Widower',

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'Disgusted' and the like. From the time I left England eighteen months had passed before my wife was able to rejoin me.

In November of 1918 there came the Armistice; and on the following New Year's Day I received a letter from His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor informing me that His Majesty had been pleased to decorate me with the C.I.E.

During 1918 grave trouble for the Punjab had been brewing (especially in Amritsar); and after the Armistice Mahatma Gandhi had given out that the British considered themselves masters of the world, but that he was master of a weapon which would 'bring them to their knees'. He was referring to his policy of Passive Resistance, later on developed into Non-Violent Non-Co-operation. About this it may be said at once that whatever his own intentions may have been, he was quite unable to control the violence of many of his followers.

Whatever opinion one may hold of his methods, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi is a most interesting figure. He belongs to the 'money-lender' caste, is sixty-eight years of age and is an English-trained lawyer. In 1893 he returned to India from Natal acclaimed for the work he had done there on behalf of the Indian settlers, and proceeded to immerse himself in Indian politics.

He is styled a Mahatma, a Superman; and I have often asked my friends, both Hindu and Mohammedan, the reason for this. They all agreed that undoubtedly he was a Superman, and they all gave me the same reasons for so thinking.

The East has always reverenced the ascetic. Gandhi is the ascetic *par excellence*. For the ordinary human affections he cares but little; for sex, money, food and wine he cares nothing whatever. For such things

ordinary men care a great deal: so what can Gandhi be except a Superman?

I can see my friends' point of view; but it passes my comprehension how anyone except the extremists anxious to make use of him, infatuated Indian admirers and a certain brand of M.P. can patiently put up with his inconsistencies. He will make one statement one day and another the next: on the third day he will astutely explain away both.

He has denounced hospitals, railway trains and motor-cars as 'satanic'; yet he uses the two latter for travelling, and when he was ill he was operated on by an English doctor in a European hospital.

He announced that he could conquer the Pathan with 'Love', though anyone acquainted with the Frontier knows that if a train were drawn up in Peshawar station ready to proceed to Bombay for a week of licensed looting, there would be a serious riot on the platform among the Frontier tribesmen struggling to get into it. Tackled as to what would happen were India to be denuded of British troops, he declared that no foreign power could ever enter India; there were, he said, 350,000,000 inhabitants of India who might be posted round the coast-line! How these millions were to be stationed there and how they were to be fed were problems for which he offered no solution.

Though he cares nothing for the material things of this world, there are two godlings whom he worships: Power and the Limelight. We have helped him to keep bright the shrines of both. An English Dean escorts him into (of all places) Canterbury Cathedral. For years no one has been allowed to drive on the Mall at Simla except the Viceroy, the Commander-in-Chief, and the Governor of the Punjab. Mr. Gandhi drives along it in his (satanic) motor-car: a

trivial matter, some might say, but all over India it is noised abroad that the Mahatma may do what other folks may not.

Gandhiji, as his disciples call him, enjoys bluffing. He achieved his masterpiece when he persuaded Lord Irwin (then the Viceroy), who was a strict Sabbatarian, to forgo his Sunday rest in order not to interrupt an important discussion. But when Monday came Gandhiji was horrified to learn that the discussion was to be resumed. Oh, no!—he could not possibly attend on a Monday: that was his “day for meditation!”

It is said that there are three personages whom Gandhiji has not been able to bluff: Lord Willingdon, Sir Michael O’Dwyer and His Holiness the Pope. I think that Lord Reading might have been added to the list.

Another of his escapades was his Salt March with his followers to the sea-shore.

Salt in India is a Government monopoly. To march to the sea and make from sea-water a little salt and consume or sell it might seem a harmless craze, but all India knew that it was the deliberate breaking of a law and learned that the Mahatma might break the law with impunity.

In imitation of Gandhi’s escapade a somewhat similar idea was started in the Punjab. Salt was to be manufactured from the soil round Lahore. The Government inquired from its chief Professor of Chemistry whether such a thing would be possible; and his reply was that some kind of salt could certainly be extracted from the soil, but that it would be of such bad quality that it would inevitably cause diarrhœa. So Government saw no reason to interfere with the movement; and the movement speedily died—shall we say?—of its own motion!

The part played by Gandhi in connection with the

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terrible troubles of the year 1919 will be mentioned later on. The pretext for the rebellion of that year was the Rowlatt Act.

During the 'cold weather' of 1917-1918 a committee known as the Sedition Committee was touring India. It held forty-six sittings in various big towns. The President was Sir Sidney Rowlatt, one of His Majesty's judges of the King's Bench Division. Of the four other members one was the Chief Justice of Bombay, and another an Indian judge of a High Court.

Their object was "to examine and consider difficulties in dealing with revolutionary conspiracies and to advise as to future legislation." They made a most exhaustive investigation of revolutionary conspiracies from the year 1907 onwards as affecting every province of India; and made inquiries regarding the deportation of undesirable persons, the prohibition of public meetings and so forth.

Before the Committee reached Lahore in February of 1918 I had to attend several conferences; and I eventually appeared before them as a witness for examination.

The result of their labours was the Rowlatt Bill, which became law on March the 18th of 1919. It was intended to take the place of the Defence of India Act of 1915 (under which we had tried the Sikh revolutionaries), but its provisions were much less drastic, since they dealt only with revolutionary and anarchical crime.

The Bill was based on the Committee's Report, a bulky volume of more than 150 printed pages. It contains much interesting material about Krishnavarma and his India House, his Paris activities and his paper, the *Indian Sociologist*. There is a chapter on German Plots, going back as far as Bernhardi's book—*Germany and the Next War*—which

was published in 1911. It also mentions an article in a Berlin newspaper of March 1914 on 'England's Indian Trouble', which adds colour to my remarks in a previous chapter regarding Har Dayal's foreknowledge of the Great War. It gives a quotation from the '*Ghadar*' newspaper of January, 1914, advising Indians to learn how to get and make rifles and "rain over the Punjab a sweet shower of guns." To my mind, coming from such high authority, one of the most interesting observations is that "no judicial appeal is allowed from the Special Tribunals' decisions" under the Defence of India Act. This, of course, was the view we judges took in declining to agree that there could be any appeal on law or facts to the Executive.

As regards the procedure for trials the Committee were of opinion that it should follow that of the Defence of India Act: that is, a trial before three judges without juries or assessors. For this they gave two reasons: that such persons would be subject to terrorism, and might be inclined to be affected by public discussion. The Committee added that it was of the "utmost importance that punishment or acquittal should be speedy." The last thing in the Report is an annexure concerned with persons killed or convicted in respect of revolutionary crimes between the years 1907 and 1917. The statistics disclosed the pitiable fact that from 16 to 25 was the most dangerous age, and that students were three times as numerous as persons of any other class.

As soon as the Rowlatt Bill became law every kind of false rumour was spread over India, especially in the Punjab. It was given out that there would be increased taxation, that four men found conversing together might be liable to arrest by the police, that not more than ten persons might attend a wedding or a funeral. It was even stated that without Government's consent

no one might marry or own more than a certain quantity of land. Nothing was too fantastic for sedition-mongers to spread abroad among a credulous public.

The idea in the minds of the instigators of the rebellion was to procure by force the repeal of the Act; and they soon began their usual practices. Riotous Students with black flags were set to parade the streets of principal towns; and posters began to appear of which these (the first of them referring to a *hartāl*) are samples:

“May God cast into Hell those who do not close their business.”

“Blessed be Mahatma Gandhi! . . . We shall never abide by the Rowlatt Bill. . . . There are many English ladies here to dishonour.”

Agents were sent about to get at the Sikh population and to obtain the aid of Afghanistan and the Frontier tribes, the last of these endeavours meeting with some success towards the end of April.

Though the Act, as I have said, did not become law until March the 18th of 1919, Gandhi had anticipated it by his manifesto issued on March the 1st about Passive Resistance; and he proceeded to proclaim a *hartāl* for the whole of India.

On March the 30th there occurred an outbreak at Delhi. Delhi, the new capital of India, is no longer in the Punjab. It stands in its own *enclave*, and more than one greybeard wagged his head and recalled the story that the foundation stone of the new capital which had been laid by his late Majesty the King-Emperor had been an old tombstone.

In pursuance of Gandhi's *hartāl* the railway station was stormed by the mob to compel the vendors of food and sweetmeats to close their stalls. The station was damaged; the police were assaulted; troops were called

out and were stoned, and firing took place. Fighting continued in the city, and sporadic disturbances in the capital of India went on until past the middle of April.

Needless to say, the extremist Press took a hand, glorifying the 'martyrs' who had been killed in the rioting. More posters began to appear in Lahore and Amritsar urging the populace to "kill and die", and warning all Englishmen to look out for what would befall them in a great rebellion due to start at Lahore on April the 6th, "our National day". People accustomed to regard Mahatma Gandhi as a rather superior saint might have expected him, after what had taken place at Delhi, to range himself at once on the side of law and order, to exert his authority to maintain peace. For years he had been proclaiming that he was a follower of the doctrine of *ahimsa*, the doctrine that no human being should harm another. He did nothing of the kind: he ordered another *hartāl* for Sunday, April the 6th!

In Gandhiji's home town of Ahmedabad, after he had been turned back from the Punjab, there took place on April the 10th and 11th savage attacks on Europeans, arson and the like. During these riots great bravery was shown by Mrs. Tuke, the wife of the Civil Surgeon. Her husband was away, and when the mob surrounded her house she threw open the doors and faced the rioters with a revolver. The mob fled, and she was ultimately rescued by some Indian gentlemen and medical students.

I now turn to the Punjab.

## CHAPTER XVII

I HAD been granted a few days' leave to fetch my wife and her French lady-companion from Bombay to Ambala. When I went to the railway station in Bombay to engage a compartment, the authorities there told me that they could guarantee taking us as far as Delhi, but that our further progress would depend on the state of affairs in the Punjab.

We found Delhi station full of troops, and reached Ambala only a few hours late. There on the platform I met Malcolm Hailey (now Lord Hailey) of the Punjab Commission, who told me that I should find telegrams at my bungalow summoning me to Lahore. I arranged with the Deputy Commissioner to come and do guard in my house, and left for Lahore the same evening.

Since Sir Michael O'Dwyer and General Dyer bulk largely in what I shall have to relate, I would offer the opinion that the former has to some extent suffered in people's estimation from a similarity of names. Often when I have mentioned Sir Michael people have said: "Oh, you mean the Amritsar man?" My reply has been: "No. The Amritsar man, as you call him, was General Dyer. I am speaking of O'Dwyer, one of the best and strongest Lieutenant-Governors that the Punjab ever had."

On arrival at Lahore I learned that I was to be President of one of the Martial Law Tribunals convened for the trial of the rioters. There were three other such tribunals, two of them presided over by High Court Judges. My two colleagues were Kennaway of the I.C.S. (like myself, a Sessions Judge) and an Indian Magistrate.

My tribunal tried a number of cases, but it would be tedious for the ordinary reader were I to discuss the various outbreaks of those terrible days which took place all over the Punjab. I shall mention a few of our cases—leaving Amritsar till the last—and say generally that many Europeans were killed or injured, while English churches, a missionary's bungalow, railway stations and bridges along with Government buildings were wrecked and burnt. There was naturally much cutting of telegraph wires.

One of our cases was that in which we tried the editor of the *Tribune* (a particularly virulent newspaper of Lahore) for his seditious writings at a time of special stress. We sentenced him to two years' imprisonment, and our decision was later on upheld by the Privy Council.

A violent attack upon us was made by a newspaper called *The Independent*, which urged that the entire proceedings of the Martial Law Ordinance Commissions should be declared null and void, and described our judgment in the *Tribune* case as "typical of the straining of law and the torturing of commonsense which have marked the activities of the Commissions". As against this outburst we have the opinion of their Lordships of the Privy Council to the effect that "the judgment was a very careful one and their Lordships do not find that the section was in any way misconstrued or misunderstood". It was further laid down that "the decision of such a Court must necessarily depend, not only on the construction of the written matter, but also on the local conditions obtaining at the time of publication and a just appreciation of the effect which the publication under those conditions of the articles in question would be calculated to produce". This, of course, was the point that I took as a witness in the libel action of '*O'Dwyer v. Nair*', to which I shall

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refer later on. For a Martial Law case our judgment was a lengthy one of some 2000 words quoting all the authorities on which we relied. I should like to add that in regard to the *Tribune* case we postponed the trial in order to allow a European barrister to appear for the accused, but the Martial Law orders prohibited lawyers outside the Punjab from entering the Province.

Another of our cases was the Kasur case. Kasur is a sub-division of the Lahore district, and the riot there took place on April the 12th. Excited by the speeches of agitators who took very good care to make themselves scarce, the mob wrecked the railway station and burnt the post office and a court. They attacked an incoming train, murdered two British warrant officers and injured four other Europeans, while the lives of an English lady and her husband and children were only saved by the bravery of an Indian gentleman, who hid them in a hut while he harangued the mob.

In respect of this case we acquitted one of the accused, sentenced three to transportation for life and sentenced eleven to death. In the matter of the death sentences we made two recommendations to mercy, taking into consideration the age of the accused and the fact that at the end of the riot they had assisted the English lady to escape.

My tribunal was not concerned with the rioting at the capital, Lahore; but what occurred there is so interesting that I may give some account of it.

From the beginning of February protest meetings about the coming Rowlatt Act were being held in a building known as the Bradlaugh Hall, in which meetings I regret to say several well-known Indian lawyers had been taking part.

The actual rioting broke out on April the 10th, and for some days until Martial Law was declared Lahore city was virtually in the hands of the mob.

A howling crowd, numbering perhaps 10,000, from the city invaded the Civil station (the European quarter); and by Sir Michael O'Dwyer's orders all English women and children were collected in Government House. Firing took place, and the police and troops who were rushed in from Lahore Cantonment some miles distant eventually drove the mob back into the city, where the fighting continued.

There was one amusing episode while the mob went swarming along the Mall. In the forefront were several misguided students. What the Rowlatt Act might be about they did not know, nor had they even got the name of it correctly. They were doing what they had been told to do, wringing their hands in mourning and wailing "Rōla! Rōla! Rōla! Rōla!" The Hindustāni word '*raula*' by the way, means 'tumult'.

From the opposite direction, on her way home, came a lady of strong personality, the manageress of a shop. She had lived for many years in the country and spoke the language fluently. As a medical attendant she was known throughout Lahore city as well as in the Zenānas of Indian princes, where she often went to nurse Indian ladies who were sick. A policeman began advising her to turn back; and seeing a policeman talking to her one of the students thought that she might be pointing him out, so he burst from the ranks and clasping her knees begged the 'Miss Sahiba' to save him! The Miss Sahiba promptly harangued him in voluble Hindustāni, telling him that she knew his father and grandfather, good men, and had even helped to bring him into the world! What did he mean by being in such bad company? Then she smacked his head and sent him home, possibly saving his life or at least insuring his liberty.

Though the rabble had been driven back by force into the city, fresh disturbances broke out next day. The news

arrived that Gandhi, who had attempted to enter the Punjab, had been refused admittance and had been sent back to Bombay under police escort. There came also the news of mob outrages against English people in Amritsar, and a poster appeared gloating over the murder of "five English monkeys" there. Another *hartāl* took place. To the fury of orthodox Mohammedans an enormous crowd of Hindus invaded one of their principal mosques, where Hindu speakers called upon the Mohammedans to join them, and inside the mosque gate was hung a banner proclaiming that 'a tyrannical King cuts his own roots'. A 'Danda Fauj'—that is, a Bludgeon Army—was formed, and the mob went yelling through the city streets burning copies of the Rowlatt Act and destroying pictures of their Majesties. Among the war-cries were 'Victory to Gandhi!' and 'Hae! Hae! George margaya!' implying that King George was dead—in other words, that he had ceased to exist as King-Emperor of India! Troops entered the city, and further firing took place; but it was not until April the 15th, when Martial Law had been established, that Lahore city was again brought under control.

Throughout these troubles two points particularly struck me: the magnificent staunchness of the Indian police and the use of Gandhi's name as a war-cry. To many of those who shouted it his name was no more than a name; one of the witnesses before the Lahore tribunal made the naïve admission: "I do not know who Gandhi is; but he has cost me my livelihood."

In view of the fact that during the early part of 1919 the Punjab was very nearly in the throes of another Great Mutiny, it seems remarkable how little the British public heard about what was happening there—that is, until the question of General Dyer's conduct became 'news'. Whether Mr. Montagu, in order to secure a 'calm atmosphere' for his Reforms, instituted

anything in the nature of a Press censorship we do not know.

Terrible though they were, the disturbances at Lahore and in other places were overshadowed by the events at Amritsar. The case of the Bank murders in that town was one of the cases tried by my tribunal, and in the course of it one of the police witnesses made mention of General Dyer and the affair at the Jallianwala Bagh. But before discussing the case I would say something about the origin of the trouble.

Amritsar, the headquarters of the Sikh religion, famous for its Golden Temple, is a town with 150,000 inhabitants. From the middle of 1918 two seditious resident in the city had been leading a violent anti-Government agitation. They were Dr. Kichlu, a Kashmiri Mohammedan barrister with the degree of a German university, and a man named Satyapal, a Hindu assistant-surgeon. They had two gang-leaders named Bagga and Rattu, both of whom were prominent in subsequent events. Rattu, by the way, had been a member of an Amritsar revolutionary society known as 'The Shining Club', another of its members having been the notorious agitator Ajit Singh, who had been deported for a while during 1907.

In view of what was happening in other towns in the Punjab and the unrest at Amritsar itself, it was considered desirable to deport Kichlu and Satyapal, and this was done. Deprived of their ring-leaders the mob broke out in fury, and headed by Bagga and Rattu attempted to invade the civil lines, the quarter in which Europeans were living. Firing took place on the part of the police and the few troops available, and the mob were driven back; while, leaving all their property behind them, the English women and children were hastily convoyed to the shelter of the old mud fort,

where for some time they had to make their quarters in extreme heat and discomfort.

On April the 10th there took place the first of a series of tragedies. The mob gave themselves up to a frenzy of slaughter and destruction, setting fire to the English church, the goods station, the Town Hall and post and telegraph offices. After smashing to pieces all the furniture with cudgels, they started a fire at a school filled with women and children. The lady missionaries and Indian Christians at the Mission Hospital were rescued by the bravery of Colonel Smith, the Civil Surgeon of Amritsar, who made a dash into the city with his ambulance. 'Smuth of Jollundur', as he was called on account of his previous long association with that place, was a big, rough, genial man, and probably one of the most skilled operators for cataract in the world. From beyond the Frontier people used to come to him to be operated on for cataract and stone, and many folk in Amritsar owed to him their eyes. Volleying abuse and shaking a huge fist at the crowd he brought away the missionaries, but when he returned to the girls' school the forces of disorder were too great.

Meanwhile, murders were taking place elsewhere. Sergeant Rowlandson, an electrician on his way to his work at the Municipal power-house, was chased and brutally slaughtered. At the railway goods-yard a goods train was looted, and Guard Robinson was beaten to death. A lady missionary, who for fifteen years had worked in and around Amritsar was attacked and left for dead in the gutter; and a lady doctor narrowly escaped with her life in an attack on the Zenāna Hospital. Both these ladies, I am glad to say, owed their lives to sympathetic Indians. The Religious Tract Society's dépôt was burnt, but the Indian Christians there escaped through an upper window.

However, the most terrible happenings were reserved for the English banks, of which there were three in the city—the Chartered, Alliance and National Banks. All three were looted, and two were set on fire; the third was not burnt because the owner of the building was an Indian.

The English officials of the Chartered Bank managed to conceal themselves, and the babus employed therein remained staunch, shouting to the crowd from the roof that the Sahibs were not inside. But the English officials of the other two banks had no such good fortune.

Those of us who have seen an Indian mob in action can picture the scene. All night there has been drum-beating, and glib-tongued orators have been haranguing the populace, harping on the sins of the Government, the iniquitous Rowlatt Act and the insult offered to Mahatma Gandhi by turning him back from the Punjab. The time is drawing near, they shout, for dealing properly with the 'white monkeys', and the looting will be great! Morning comes, and through all the streets and alleyways the rabble swarm in their thousands, yelling their war-cries, ready to join in wholesale plundering and murder. There are more fiery speeches; and then the speakers, mindful of their own skins, fade cleverly out of the picture. The rabble has been sufficiently worked up.

The crowd surges forward. In front are the butchers, burly ruffians, and perhaps a sprinkling of fanatical students. Behind them follow the riffraff of the *bazārs*. Last of all come the Kashmiri labourers, stalwart bearded men, but cowards at heart, ready enough to loot and to finish off the injured.

The mob burst roaring into one of the banks, and the looting begins. While some of the rioters hunt for the money-bags and try to force open the safes, others

are smashing the doors of the store-houses wherein are kept the costly bales of silk and merchandise deposited as security for loans.

Meanwhile, the braver or more fanatical of the mob have climbed the staircase to an upper room, where that morning the two English bank officials have been working at their desks. Against such numbers they are helpless; the police arrive too late and are too few; so the two Englishmen are battered to death with bludgeons and their bodies are flung from a window into the street. One of them, it seems, is still alive, but the murderers know no pity. The office furniture is piled on the two bodies, is drenched with kerosene and set alight.

Yelling triumphantly the mob surges on to another bank. There is only one Englishman there, who fires his revolver point-blank into the crowd—but what is the use of that? He too, is hammered to a pulp with *lāthi* blows, his body is flung from a verandah, and another flaming pyre is lighted in the street.

Later on, the charred remains of the three bodies are carried by the police to the mortuary in the English quarter.

In Sir Michael O'Dwyer's book, *India as I knew It*, and in Mr. Ian Colvin's book, *The Story of General Dyer*, there are more detailed descriptions of the Amritsar disturbances; but what I have related formed the substance of part of the evidence produced before my Martial Law tribunal. At the conclusion of the case Bagga and Rattu, their guilt proved to the hilt, were among those sentenced to death.

Speedily a clamour about them was started by Indian agitators and in the native Press. No sensible person would believe that the *Intelligentsia* really cared two straws whether a couple of Amritsar murderers of the class of Bagga and Rattu were executed; but com-

pared with the rest of the accused they were men of importance. To get them reprieved from the death sentence would enhance the prestige of the agitators.

Once more *The Independent* newspaper lashed itself to frenzy, and the copy of it sent me anonymously bears typewritten in the margin: "*Read this and weep for years. You are no better than a murderer.*" Included in its condemnation is Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy, for his refusal to stay the executions of Bagga and Rattu. The clamour, however, eventually reached England and *consule* Montagu proved successful.

I turn now to subsequent events at Amritsar.

The city was still in the hands of the mob when General Dyer arrived there from Jullundur on the night of April the 11th and proceeded to take stock of the situation.

A good many people in this country have looked upon General Dyer as a monster of cruelty: the men of his old regiment and his old Indian servants could tell a different tale. To suggest that he was inimical to Indians is to talk utter nonsense. Much of his childhood had been spent in the country, and he talked fluently four Eastern languages. He was a bluff, genial, brave, skilled soldier, who both before and after Amritsar had a war record of which any man might be proud.

Another thing to bear in mind about him is this—and in my opinion it has never been sufficiently emphasised—that he was not merely responsible for Amritsar. He was responsible for a much larger area, of which Amritsar only formed a part; and on both sides of him his communications had been, so to speak, cut by riotous outrages.

Ever since the horrible butcheries on the 10th, Amritsar city had been humming like a swarm of bees. Every kind of false rumour was being put about; that

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Lahore fort had been captured by the rebels, that the troops had mutinied and that the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab had been killed.

On the morning of April the 12th General Dyer marched some of his troops, British and Indian, through the city, meeting with sullen crowds who refused to disperse and spat on the ground as the troops passed. Bagga and another ring-leader were arrested. The same evening the General issued a proclamation prohibiting all gatherings and announcing that all such meetings would be at once dispersed under military law.

On the morning of the 13th the General again marched a column of troops through the city, and made proclamation to the effect that all gatherings would be dispersed, if necessary by force of arms.

Now, there is evidence that the proclamation was made at nineteen different places in Amritsar city, and India is a country where both news and rumours travel apace. One of the points afterwards urged against General Dyer was that among the crowd fired upon by his orders at the Jallianwala Bagh were people who did not belong to the city, but were 'visitors' from outlying villages who might not have heard the proclamation. Undoubtedly there were 'visitors'; but I very much doubt the proposition that they were ignorant of the proclamation. In the huge concourse gathered there one might reasonably suppose that it formed one of the topics of discussion; and in addition there was the evidence that the meeting had been addressed by eight revolutionary speakers, four of whom had been actually implicated in the Bank murders. It follows that, even if some of these 'visitors' were ignorant of the proclamation, they could certainly have been under no misapprehension as to the nature of the meeting which they were attending.

Though handbills of the proclamation printed in the vernacular had been distributed, the General learned before he left the city that a meeting was to be held that afternoon. At four o'clock in the afternoon he heard that a meeting in the Jallianwala Bagh was actually in progress.

'Bagh' means 'garden'; but the Jallianwala Bagh was in no sense a garden. It is not far from the famous Golden Temple, and is an enclosure some two hundred yards long, partially filled with *débris* and surrounded by houses with boundary walls between them. It was a place frequently used for mass meetings. The entrance to it is through a narrow lane, so narrow that it would not allow the passage of an armoured car.

At about half-past four in the afternoon General Dyer arrived upon the scene. He was employing only Indian troops on this occasion; and his tiny force consisted of fifty soldiers armed with rifles and forty Gurkhas armed with their *kukris*, short regimental chopping-knives, ninety men in all. He had two armoured cars, but had had to leave them outside the passage.

When General Dyer and his force emerged from the passage they came at once upon the mass meeting, and found it being harangued by a speaker (one of those implicated in the Bank murders), who was standing on a table reciting a revolutionary poem. The General at the time got the impression that the crowd were some five thousand in number; but subsequent estimates, given by persons who had no friendly feelings towards him, put the number at anything between ten thousand and twenty thousand persons. Whatever may be the correct figure this is certain, that his force of ninety men was confronted by a huge and inimical concourse. Without giving the mob any further warning, he ordered his troops to open fire.

It is legitimate, I think, to consider what may have been at the back of the General's mind when he gave this order. He knew that the meeting was being held in defiance of a clear proclamation against it. He knew what had been happening in Lahore and in other towns in the Punjab. He knew of the terrible happenings in Amritsar itself, where the English women and children were huddled in the fort. He knew of the approaching Afghan trouble, which actually materialised early in May. And there may have been in his mind one other thought, regarding which I can only say that intimate friends of his spoke to me of it at the time. His forbears had known the Great Mutiny, and it had been impressed on him in his youth that, should such circumstances occur again, it would be well to act ruthlessly in order to avert an even greater disaster.

It was afterwards estimated that as a result of the firing some 380 persons had been killed and some 1200 others had been wounded. It was admitted that the firing went on for some ten minutes.

One of the criticisms levelled at General Dyer's action was that he gave no order for dispersal to the mob before commencing to fire. But apart from the fact of the previous proclamation, there is this to be considered: is it likely that any order for dispersal would have been heard and obeyed? Only the day before, the crowd in the streets had spat as the troops passed by: is it not reasonable to suppose that a war-cry shouted by some ringleader would have brought the whole assembly on top of him and his ninety men? Their numbers were so great that they could have wiped out his force with their bare hands, let alone with *lāthis*; and in that case what would have been the result in the Punjab?

When subsequently the Secretary of State (Mr. Montagu) referred to an "apparently unarmed as-

sembly", he was overlooking the evidence as to the *lāthis*; though one Member of Parliament went so far as to mention "a crowd armed only with walking-sticks". It is certainly true that the Sikh peasant takes his *lāthi* with him when he goes walking; but as we Sessions Judges know, it is a heavy bamboo quarter-staff bound with brass or iron, with which an enemy's body can be beaten, bones and all, to a pulp.

It is easy for arm-chair critics after the event to pronounce an opinion on such a point; but the only opinion to which I personally can come is that General Dyer was justified in commencing to fire when he did.

Another point taken by his critics was whether the order to cease fire might not have been given sooner? In this connection I would mention the evidence of the Deputy Superintendent of Police, who was with General Dyer at the time, given before my tribunal. I remember his statement well. It was, of course, made in open court; but I do not think that it has ever before been printed, since I was not called as a witness before the Hunter Committee. He stated as follows:

'After the firing had gone on for some time, the General turned to me and asked: "Do you think they've had enough?" I said: "Yes, sir, I think they have." Then the General pointed to a lot of men struggling about near a wall, and said: "What about those men?" Then he ordered the firing to begin again.'

The point, therefore, is certainly debatable. If we accept the D.S.P.'s view, the firing might have ceased earlier. On the other hand there is evidence (not given before my tribunal) to show that both the General and his Brigade-Major (who unfortunately died before he could be examined by the Hunter Committee) gained the impression that the men pointed to might be trying to get round or rush the small force of soldiers. Personally, I think it quite likely that those struggling

men were persons attempting to escape from the Bagh over the boundary walls; and it is possible to argue that the firing might have ceased before it did. But of what real value can be the opinion of anyone who was not actually on the spot at the time?

To my mind one fact stands out as clear as daylight. Whatever view one may take of General Dyer's action in the affair of the Jallianwala Bagh, the result of it was the salvation of the Punjab, possibly of the whole of India, from the horrors of another Mutiny. Owing to what he did there the lives of many English men, women and children were preserved from brutal massacre; and the lives of countless Indians were saved likewise, for who can say how many would have fallen had the rebellion developed into a war between Britain and India?

Dyer's arraignment was yet to come; but before he left for the Third Afghan War (in which his relief of Thal was a brilliant feat of arms) the Sikhs in Amritsar at their Golden Temple had initiated him and his Brigade-Major into their brotherhood; just as they had made a Sikh of General John Nicholson, that great soldier-administrator of the Mutiny days, though he had fought against them. To General Dyer they erected a shrine and offered him ten thousand men to fight in the Afghan War!

I have before me three letters written to Sir Michael O'Dwyer. One is from a retired member of the Punjab Commission, whom we all knew as one of the kindest-hearted men in the world and a good friend of Indians. He comments on how history had repeated itself in the Amritsar district. He recalls how during the Mutiny Cooper, the Deputy Commissioner, intercepted the Jhelum mutineers, penned them up in a confined space and shot those who came out alive in the morning.

The writer's father, who in the absence of Sir John Lawrence was directing operations in the Central Punjab, wrote to Cooper that he had done well. Cooper, however, afterwards wrote a book in which he boasted of what he had done, and questions were asked in Parliament. The writer's father, who by that time had become Lieutenant-Governor, held to his opinion that Cooper's main action had been justified, though his book had been written in the worst possible taste. Regarding the Amritsar episode the writer's comment is: "One feels that Dyer was a strong man, who realised that sternness was necessary, but one cannot excuse the 'crawling order'. I hope he will not suffer for his indiscretion, for he was right in the main, though some of his methods are open to criticism."

The 'crawling' order, passed under Martial Law with General Dyer's authority, has been defended by no one; and I shall mention it in my next chapter.

The second letter is from a high official of the Central Provinces, who speaks of his own difficulties and says: "You deserve the gratitude of everyone in India for the way in which you dealt with a very difficult situation", and adds: "I hope the Government have learned a lesson and at last got to understand that what is wanted is not shilly-shallying, but straight and clear action which the people understand".

This remark recalls to my mind what my old Indian friends said to me after the bomb attempt on Lord Hardinge's life at Delhi.

The third letter was written by the late Colonel Sir George Roos Keppel, the Frontier warden in Peshawar, in the middle of May of 1919, when the third Afghan War was imminent. He writes: "What a blessing you got the Punjab in hand before this show started!" The letter contains the interesting item of information that in reply to a letter from the Viceroy the Amir had

written from Kabul *ordering* him to withdraw the Rowlatt Act! That Act, of course, in no way concerned the Amir or Afghanistan; but this *order* was issued with the idea of bringing Indian Mohammedans on to the side of the Afghans.

I shall end this chapter by quoting a few trenchant observations of Lord Minto in a letter written to Lord Morley. It was certainly written eleven years before the Punjab disturbances; but I bear in mind that Lord Minto was no fire-eater, but was himself one of the sponsors of a Reforms scheme. This is what he wrote:

“We cannot await developments, as you can at home. People in England are not surrounded by questions of racial hatred. At home people can afford to smile at sedition, possibly even at the explosion of a few bombs. Here it is utterly different —the bomb explodes in the middle of a huge powder magazine.

“Government by the strong hand is what appeals to the majority of the different populations of this country.

“The modern House of Commons is absolutely incapable of understanding Indian humanity and the influences of many creeds and conditions, and is to my mind perhaps the greatest danger to the continuance of our rule in this country.

“The extremists unfortunately have the loudest voices, and are taken in England to represent the people of India, which is the wildest of all the absurd ideas that are accepted by the British public.”

## CHAPTER XVIII

LAHORE was still under Martial Law when Tomkins (Deputy Inspector-General of Police) and I, coming out of the Punjab Club one evening, agreed that the peace of India would be secure for the next twenty years. We were quite wrong. We had reckoned without the politicians and the Hunter Committee.

This Committee was appointed to investigate the disturbances in the Punjab and other parts of India, and began its work towards the end of 1919. It was presided over by Lord Hunter, a Scottish judge; and there were seven other members, including three Indian lawyers.

Its composition could hardly have been called fortunate. Sir Michael O'Dwyer was to be one of the principal witnesses before it, and he has recorded that one of the Indian members some two years previously had attacked him violently in a speech which he had had publicly to withdraw. Another had been refused admittance to the Punjab by Major-General Sir William Beynon (G.O.C. 16th Division, Lahore) when he had wished to appear for some of the prisoners before a Martial Law Tribunal. The President was entirely ignorant of India, its conditions, and its languages. Not one of the Committee belonged to the Punjab.

Most of the Committee's sittings took place in public; and this, too, was unfortunate, for it enabled the partisans of the rebels to attend them and vociferously express their opinions of the evidence being given.

There were other points open to objection. The

lengthy judgments concerned with Amritsar and Lahore in cases presided over by High Court judges seem to have been ignored; and then there was the matter of the record of evidence given before the Committee.

Who recorded the evidence we do not know; but it was probably an Indian shorthand typist. In India there are few Englishmen employed on such work; and a certain statement, attributed to General Dyer, but denied by him, seems to point to this conclusion. What Mr. Ian Colvin (who interviewed the reporter for the *Pioneer* newspaper—a Mr. Watson) has made clear in his book is that the Committee had "got itself into such a mess" over the report of the evidence that what was finally printed was a mixture of the *Pioneer* reporter's notes and the official report patched together. The record of his evidence sent to Sir Michael O'Dwyer was so full of mistakes that, after correcting a few pages, he returned it as hopeless. General Dyer did not even see what had been recorded as his evidence; and about this Mr. Montagu subsequently stated that he "understood" that the reason for this was that Dyer had been away on duty on the Frontier. But it would have been a simple matter to have sent him the record to Jamrud.

An interesting point noted in Lord Hunter's memorandum at the commencement of the Committee's report is the refusal of the All-India Congress Committee to co-operate in the inquiry held at Lahore, where Lord Hunter and his colleagues sat for six weeks. This was because their demand had not been acceded to that the principal Punjab leaders should be temporarily released from imprisonment on security. Later on an offer to co-operate was made; but by that time the recording of evidence had been concluded. Naturally, one asks oneself whether this was not an

astute move on the part of the Congress to furnish a grievance which might be ventilated in the Press and in Parliament?

The Committee commenced its sittings at the end of October of 1919, and in March of the following year produced a Report which is a rather remarkable document. As a matter of fact, it consisted of a Majority and a Minority Report, the latter of which was signed by the three Indian members of the Committee.

The Report commences with a consideration of the disturbances at Delhi; and one cannot but feel surprise at the conclusion that those disturbances "never took the form of an anti-European and anti-Government movement." There was admittedly "hostility to the authorities", there were collisions between the mob and the police and troops with firing, traffic was stopped at the station, a railway official was assaulted, railway property was damaged, a police inspector was "very badly assaulted" at a meeting and there were frequent *hartāls*. It is admitted that the first outbreak at Delhi arose out of Gandhi's Passive Resistance movement in connection with the Rowlatt Act; and it is said that political agitation in Delhi had been on the increase owing to its having become the capital of India. It is concluded, however, that the lower orders, having nothing to do on account of the *hartāl*, just got out of control!

The entire Committee was of opinion that there was nothing to show that the outbreak in the Punjab was part of a prearranged conspiracy to overthrow the British Government in India by force. There was certainly nothing to show that a band of conspirators had met together and concocted plans; but what of the *hartāls* and massacres and destruction in all those different towns? Are we to suppose that the insti-

gators of trouble in all those different neighbouring towns were never in communication with one another? Were all those outbreaks sporadic and unconnected? What of the 'posters', the significance of which the Minority signatories were anxious to explain away?

For once I find myself in complete agreement with Mr. Gandhi, who on the day following the tragedy at the Jallianwala Bagh uttered this pronouncement at his home town of Ahmedabad:

"It seems to me that the deeds I have complained of have been done in an organized manner. There seems to be a definite design about them, and I am sure that there must be some clever man or men behind them. They may be educated, but their education has not enlightened them; you have been misled into doing these things by such people."

It is only reasonable to suppose that Mr. Gandhi from his very position had as good a knowledge of affairs as a Committee making an investigation several months later; and he seems to have had no doubt about the 'organization' of the movement by a 'clever man or men'.

The Majority report does go so far as to admit that it would have been "probably unsafe for the authorities not to assume that the outbreak was the result of a definite organization", and continues: "Apart from the existence of any deeply-laid scheme to overthrow the British, a movement which had started in rioting and become a rebellion might have rapidly developed into a revolution." The Majority definitely pronounced their opinion that there had been "open rebellion".

The Minority would have nothing to do with this view; it is reiterated frequently throughout their report

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that there was "no rebellion", nor any intention to put an end to the British Government. Apropos of the rioters, there is one remark in the Minority report calculated to cause anyone acquainted with lawyers to smile: "Their acts may amount in law to waging war under the Penal Code, but it was not rebellion in the sense in which it is ordinarily understood."

The Majority agree with the view of Mrs. Annie Besant (herself at times a fire-brand in Indian politics) expressed in a letter written in April to the effect that the misdeeds in the Punjab were the work of "revolutionaries". The Minority disagree with this, and cite another of her letters, written in December, to the effect that she had been "shocked to read the evidence given by the military witnesses". The ordinary person might consider that neither of these letters was of the smallest value to anyone!

There is a great deal in the Report regarding the introduction and continuance of Martial Law, the Majority holding that the authorities were justified in declaring it. The Minority held that Martial Law was not necessary, and apparently considered that the Civil power could have dealt with the situation. This view seems entirely to disregard the fact of how utterly impotent the Civil power was in places such as Lahore and Amritsar, where for days the city was in the hands of the mob. One rather quaint reason advanced in support of this view was that the "Afghan situation had not materialised". It materialised in May; and that it was imminent appears from Sir George Roos Keppel's letter, which I quoted in the preceding chapter. Yet the Minority held that the introduction of Martial Law, merely as a preventive measure, was not justified. Speaking from personal experience of those times I tremble to think what Lahore and Amritsar would have been like without it.

Some of the orders passed under Martial Law were, no doubt, to say the least, injudicious. They included making persons skip and touch the ground with their foreheads in the dust, and so on. The Majority of the committee were apparently not entirely against flogging in certain cases, provided it did not take place in public. As regards the 'fancy punishments' of which I have just spoken, I can mention one instance which was certainly not sanctioned by any Martial Law authority! Outside one of the wrecked railway stations, entirely of his own initiative, an old retired Sikh officer took his seat with a Union Jack and insisted on everyone who approached the station saluting the British flag!

Of the Martial Law orders the most criticised was, naturally, that known as the 'crawling' order; and I have never yet heard anyone defend it. It was passed under General Dyer's authority in Amritsar, and was not passed until six days after the affair at the Jallianwala Bagh. According to it no Indian might go along the street where the English lady missionary had been left for dead in the gutter unless he crawled along it on all-fours. Needless to say, the Lieutenant-Governor procured the cancellation of this order directly he learned of it. General Dyer explained afterwards that he imagined that after such an order no Indian would use the street; but it appeared that there was no other ready means of access to the houses therein, and in any case no good has ever come of humiliating possibly innocent persons because others of their race have been guilty of outrages.

With another of the Martial Law orders I find myself at variance. It concerned the Lahore students, and was passed by Lieutenant-Colonel Frank Johnson (late O.C. 4th Royal Sussex), who so ably administered Martial Law in Lahore. In subsequent proceedings

Mr. Justice McCardie described him as a man with "a smiling face and a pleasant manner", but for all that "a man of iron". No one who knew Colonel Johnson could help liking him; but I do not approve of his order about the students. Earlier in this book I have expressed my sympathy with the weedy, ill-nourished Indian student; and I think that the order requiring the students to attend four roll-calls a day was too drastic and a mistake. It meant for them sixteen miles of daily tramping under a hot Indian sun. The order was passed in all good faith "to keep them out of mischief", and some of them had been with the riotous mobs; but I think that one roll-call a day might have been sufficient, at a time not arbitrarily fixed. They would then have been kept out of mischief awaiting a summons without knowing at what hour the summons might come.

As was quite natural, the attention of the Committee was much focused on the events at Amritsar and especially the episode of the Jallianwala Bagh.

The Majority express the opinion that notice to the crowd to disperse should have been given before commencing the firing, to enable people ignorant of the proclamations and others who might wish to do so to leave the place. They admit that the risk of a small force being overwhelmed by a threatening mob might justify firing without this formality, and admit that the only person who can judge whether or not such an emergency has arisen is the officer in command of the troops. What they take exception to is the fact that Dyer made up his mind beforehand to fire, if he should find the meeting in progress in spite of the prohibition. They consider that General Dyer "committed a grave error" by firing as long as he did, and that his desire to produce a moral effect in the Punjab was "a mistaken conception of his duty".

Curiously enough, though they quote and comment on Sir Michael O'Dwyer's approval of Dyer's action supplementing the approval of Major-General Beynon, they do not appear to have passed any direct censure on Sir Michael himself. However, they disagree with his view and those of other people that Dyer's action was the decisive factor in crushing a serious rebellion. This opinion they base partly on their previous conclusion that prior to the outbreaks no conspiracy to overthrow British power had been proved.

Yet we who were in the very midst of these troubles believed that Dyer had crushed the rebellion. Were we all wrong?

In the Minority report much of Dyer's evidence was printed in the form of question and answer. The Minority considered that his proclamation had been insufficiently promulgated, and commented on his decision to fire being made before reaching the spot and his desire to produce a moral effect in the Punjab.

One of the printed answers to a question is so extraordinary that it seems impossible to believe that he ever made it. We know that he never saw the record of his evidence; and he afterwards denied having ever made such a statement. It is as follows:

“I had made up my mind that I would *do all men to death* if they were going to continue the meeting”. The italics are mine.

Now, to people who knew General Dyer it seems inconceivable that he should have so expressed himself. The phrase smacks of the babu shorthand typist, or of a novelist writing a mediæval romance. Had General Dyer wished to make such a statement, he might have said: “I had made up my mind to shoot everyone”, or have used some similar phrase. But not: “do all men to death”. There are one or two other phrases almost as extraordinary; and we have learned from

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Mr. Ian Colvin's book how the report of the evidence was patched together. One cannot, of course, say definitely that these statements were not made, but they sound utterly improbable. If they were made, the most that can be said for the General is that according to onlookers he was a weary man being not so much questioned by a Committee as being cross-examined by lawyers in a hostile atmosphere.

The Minority comment on the General's admission that the crowd might possibly have been dispersed without firing, though he thought that in that case they would have reassembled, and his admission that there may no doubt have been persons in the crowd who had not heard the proclamation, though as he said such news spreads very rapidly.

The Minority censure Sir Michael O'Dwyer for his approval of General Dyer's action. When he expressed the opinion that the meeting was held to show hostility to Government and sympathy with those who had committed rebellion and murder, he was asked whether that "particular crowd" had committed murder or rebellion? This was an impossible question for him to answer: but as I have remarked before it was most unfortunate that the Committee should not have taken into consideration the judgments of the Martial Law tribunals. Had they done this, they would have learnt from the judgment in the case tried by a High Court judge, Mr. Justice Broadway (reported in the newspapers), that of the eight speakers who addressed that meeting four had been actually implicated in the Bank murders.

Towards the conclusion of their report there comes once more their opinion:

*"There was no rebellion which required to be crushed."*

One is left with the uncomfortable conviction that all through the Minority report there is the desire to

minimise what we in the Punjab knew only too well to be an anti-British rebellion.

Not long afterwards came the Government of India's letter to the Secretary of State (Mr. Montagu) reviewing the Committee's report. The sole Indian member's views were in the main those of the Minority.

Much of the letter consists of a recital of the Committee's findings; but there are some pertinent observations about the activities of Mahatma Gandhi.

It is said that the outbreaks at Delhi were the first-fruits of his Passive Resistance movement, and mention is made of the trouble in his own part of the country, where arson, murders and attempted train-wrecking took place, while an Indian magistrate was pursued, dragged from a house, soaked with kerosene and burnt alive in the street with a pile of public records atop of him.

The Government agree that misrepresentations of the Rowlatt Act formed an important cause of the outbreaks; and believe that many of those who joined Gandhi's Passive Resistance movement did so with the intention of using it for the purpose of promoting disorder. Yet the Committee came to the conclusion that there was no proof of a "conspiracy!"

The Government of India, in commenting on the Delhi disturbances, point out that "at this critical juncture" Gandhi vigorously renewed his campaign of civil disobedience and started for Delhi and the Punjab, and say that he was "the leading spirit of a movement to paralyse the Government". They remark on his "avowed intention to break the law of the land" and secure adherents to his movement; and as we know, some years later he broke it with impunity by reason of his Salt March.

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Attention is called to the particularly vile posters in a Punjab town, calling on Indians in the "blessed name of Gandhi to fight to the death against English cheats and dishonour English women". Yet the Minority signatories of the report held that there was 'no rebellion !'

One of the Minority's grievances was the imposition of Martial Law and its continuance; and one of their reasons was that the Afghan situation had "not materialised". The Government's letter points out that "the thunder-cloud on the frontier burst" some two weeks after the imposition of Martial Law, and that troops for the Afghan war were being mobilised on May the 4th. Yet the Minority had endeavoured to minimise the importance of attacks on railways.

As regards General Dyer and the affair at the Jallianwala Bagh it is said that it cannot be doubted that "most of the residents of Amritsar at the meeting were aware of the orders, and collected in defiance of them"; but it is held that a warning should have been given before the firing, "though it is most improbable that an excited and defiant mob would have dispersed on a mere warning".

General Dyer's action in continuing to fire for so long is considered "indefensible"; and it is held that, though he acted honestly, he showed "a misconception of his duty". It is, however, added that "the result of his action at the time checked the spread of the disturbances to an extent which is now difficult to estimate. This was the opinion of many intelligent observers in the Punjab."

Towards the end of the letter the General's *bona fides* and the "immediate discouragement of the forces of disorder" are again mentioned; but he is again censured for acting beyond the necessity of the case and for want of humanity. There is a brief tribute

to his distinguished record and the gallant relief of Thal; and then come the ominous words that Government's judgment shall be communicated to H.E. the Commander-in-Chief with a request that he will take appropriate action.

There is in the letter some censure of Sir Michael O'Dwyer for his approval of Dyer's action; but it is also said that it was fortunate that the Punjab was in the charge of a Lieutenant-Governor of great experience and courage. It is said that he acted with decision and vigour in a time of great danger; and that Government gratefully acknowledge his efforts to restore a peaceful atmosphere within the province.

What surprises me about the letter is, that there does not seem to be a clear pronouncement on the part of the Government as to whether or not there was an 'open rebellion'.

The reply to this letter was the Secretary of State for India's despatch.

Mr. Montagu opens it by saying that the conclusions therein have been mainly inspired by the belief that the Hunter Report should not primarily be used to apportion blame to individuals or visit penalties on them, but rather to prevent recurrence in future of occasion for blame or regret. He then proceeds at once to the case of General Dyer.

Twice in these conclusions he speaks of an 'unarmed' assembly, and he also says that many members at the meeting must have been unaware that they were disobeying orders. He apparently forgets the matter of the *lāthis* and the fact that eight revolutionary speakers (including four who were implicated in the Bank murders) addressed that meeting.

He considers the omission to give a warning before firing "inexcusable"; though His Majesty's Government think it possible that the danger to the lives of

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Europeans and to the safety of British and Indian troops was greater than appeared from the Committee's report.

He admits that General Dyer "naturally could not dismiss from his mind conditions in the Punjab generally, and he was entitled to lay his plans with reference to those conditions"; but goes on to say that the General "was not entitled to select for condign punishment an unarmed crowd, which had committed no act of violence or attempted to oppose him by force".

Then comes what Mr. Justice McCardie called in later proceedings the 'Doom' of General Dyer. Mr. Montagu writes:

"That General Dyer displayed honesty of purpose and unflinching adherence to his conception of his duty cannot for a moment be questioned. But his conception of his duty in the circumstances in which he was placed was so fundamentally at variance with that which His Majesty's Government have a right to expect from and a duty to enforce on officers who hold His Majesty's commission, that it is impossible to regard him as fitted to remain entrusted with the responsibilities which his rank and position impose upon him."

Finally the Secretary approves of the decision requiring General Dyer to resign his position as a Brigade Commander and informing him that he would receive no further employment in India.

There is a word of censure for Sir Michael O'Dwyer; but also a tribute to his "great energy, decision and courage in a period of exceptional difficulty".

During July of 1920 there was a discussion of the Dyer case in the House of Commons. Mr. Montagu,

anxious about his Reforms Bill, made a virulent attack upon General Dyer, and certain other prominent politicians did not exactly cover themselves with glory. Sir Edward Carson and Sir William Joynson-Hicks stood up for Dyer. In the course of the discussion much nonsense was talked about an 'unarmed' crowd listening to a 'lecture'!

About a fortnight later, in the calmer atmosphere of the House of Lords there came a vindication; two great judges raising the question whether General Dyer had had a fair trial, and Lord Finlay saying that "they would have to consider whether they were prepared to lay down as a rule to be observed in all cases that rebels, like dogs, are to be allowed to have a first bite; that rebels are to be dispersed, but are not to be dealt with more severely than by dispersal".

But the real vindication of General Dyer took place in 1924 in a British Court of Justice, when the libel action—'*O'Dwyer v. Nair*'—was tried by the late Mr. Justice McCordie with a jury. In that case I was one of Sir Michael's witnesses.

Sir Sankaran Nair had been a judge of the Madras High Court and a member of the Government of India. He had written a book entitled: '*Gandhi and Anarchy*', which contained five libels of Sir Michael, who won his case. The trial lasted for nearly five weeks, and well over one hundred witnesses were examined. The judge's summing-up to the jury occupied the better part of two days.

Here I must digress for a moment to explain how the book came to be written; and to note that in the second edition the offending passages were either omitted or altered.

In the Malabar district of the Madras province there dwell a Mohammedan community known as the

Moplahs. They are descendants of Arab immigrants who married Hindu women and women of the ancient Dravidian race; and they are intensely fanatical.

After the Great War certain Mohammedan agitators started what is known as the Khilāfat movement, directed against the Government on account of what many Mohammedans considered the harsh terms imposed upon Turkey. The Khalifa, or Caliph as we call him, was looked upon as the head of Mohammedanism, the successor of the Prophet Mohammed; and after the War an agitation had arisen to remove the Sultan from Constantinople.

Though he was a Hindu, Gandhi allied himself with two prominent Mohammedan agitators known as the Ali brothers.

In 1921 there broke out the terrible Moplah rebellion. Whereas the Punjab rebellion had been suppressed in a few weeks at the cost of five hundred lives and two thousand five hundred persons brought to trial, the Moplah rebellion under the more lenient *régime* lasted for nearly a year. Two thousand Mohammedans were killed by the troops in the course of it, and no less than twenty thousand persons were brought to trial. The most horrible excesses took place: Hindu women were raped, Hindus were made to dig their own graves before being slaughtered and were skinned alive, thousands of them were circumcised and forcibly converted to Mohammedanism.

It was, therefore, not surprising that Sir Sankaran Nair should write his book, in which he said: "All this was due directly to the visit of Gandhi and Shaukat Ali and to the organisation of Khilāfat associations." He wrote further (Lord Willingdon at the time of the rebellion being the Governor of Madras) that "the Government of Madras was prevented from interfering with Khilāfat agitators by the

Government of India, who were therefore as responsible as if they had ordered all this frightfulness."

Presumably in order to tone down his denunciation of Gandhi and the anarchists Sir Sankaran Nair inserted in the first edition of his book the five libels against Sir Michael, amongst other things accusing him of 'terrorism' and the committing of an 'atrocity'. One of these libels was thus worded:

"Before the reform it was in the power of the Lieutenant-Governor, a single individual, to commit the atrocities in the Punjab we know only too well."

It is important to bear in mind that the conduct of General Dyer at Amritsar was one of the main issues in the case before Mr. Justice McCardie; it being distinctly alleged that the General had committed an atrocity by ordering the shooting at Amritsar, and that Sir Michael had caused or was responsible for the commission of the alleged atrocity.

One may be mistaken, but it looks very much as though some of Sir Sankaran Nair's material had been taken from a cablegram sent by the United Provinces Congress Committee to the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State and leading English newspapers.

Among Sir Michael's witnesses were several well-known persons: Viscount Chelmsford (an ex-Viceroy), General Sir Charles Monro (formerly Commander-in-Chief in India), Major-General Sir William Baynon and Sir John Maffey (late Chief Commissioner of the Indian Frontier Province, afterwards Governor of the Sudan and now Permanent Secretary for the Colonies).

I shall not worry my readers with details of this lengthy trial; but I frankly admit that, having been

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for so many years a judge in a court, the novel experience of being a witness was one that I relished.

As soon as I entered the witness-box the late Sir Walter Schwabe, who was leading counsel for the Defendant, asked me whether my Martial Law tribunal had sentenced the editor of the *Tribune* newspaper of Lahore to two years' imprisonment for seditious writings? I assented, and added that our judgment had been upheld by the Privy Council. That, Sir Walter said, he did not wish to go into: what he proposed to do was to read out from our judgment certain newspaper passages and ask me to explain to the jury why we had considered them seditious.

I at once objected to answering questions put in this form, saying that we judges had had to consider each passage with regard to its context and to bear in mind the state of affairs in the Punjab at the time when they were written. This view had been upheld by their Lordships of the Privy Council. Sir Walter began to wave aside my objection; but Mr. Justice McCardie then leaned forward and told him that my objection was perfectly justified.

I seized my opportunity and asked the judge for permission to read our entire judgment to the jury, saying that being a Martial Law judgment it was not really very long, though it contained the grounds for our decision and the authorities on which we had relied. With something of a groan the judge said: "I suppose it has got to come! Very well." So in a crowded and silent court I read the whole judgment to the jury; and when I had finished, Sir Walter sat down.

I saw another opportunity, and asked for permission to put a question to Counsel. This was granted, and Sir Walter stood up again. I said that perhaps I had not quite grasped the point which he was anxious to

make with the jury: was it that the tribunals had been appointed simply to punish everyone who came up in front of them? In tones of deep sorrow Sir Walter disclaimed any such idea, and I thanked him and left the witness-box. But I had realised very quickly that what he had wished to suggest to the jury, of course in the interests of his client, was that we Martial Law judges had been merely the 'tools' of the Lieutenant-Governor. I am supported in this opinion by a book on India recently published, which I shall refer to again. It describes a "Special Tribunal" as "a legal disguise for organised vengeance".

The great judge's summing-up lies before me. It is full of wisdom, but I can quote only a few passages:

"Idealism is a great thing; but may be a fault, almost a crime, when it fails to face the grave realities of life."

"Always behind the problems of India and the Punjab lies the problem of the North-West Frontier and Afghanistan."

"What I regard as the supreme duty of Government is to maintain order and repress anarchy. Without the enforcement of law there can be no good thing for the people."

Commenting on the point that if General Dyer and his force had been wiped out, the consequences might have been appalling, the judge went on to say:

"Rebellions lead to insurrections; insurrection leads to civil war; civil war is a terrible thing."

And then, most important of all, came this solemn pronouncement:

“Speaking with full deliberation, and knowing the whole of the evidence given in this case, I express my view that General Dyer under the grave and exceptional circumstances acted rightly; and in my opinion upon this evidence he was wrongly punished by the Secretary of State for India.”

These words, no doubt, must have comforted the General, though he was on his death-bed at the time when they were spoken. Sir Michael, of course, won his case.

Subsequent to the trial came the unusual incident of a Prime Minister (Mr. Ramsay MacDonald) censuring a Judge of the High Court for certain remarks made in the course of his summing-up. According to the report in Hansard the Premier, replying on a motion of Mr. Lansbury M.P., spoke as follows:

“I have come to the conclusion that a discussion on this subject would only add to the harm that has been done in India by the words complained of. However unfortunate the words have been, they clearly do not constitute the kind of fault amounting to a moral delinquency which constitutionally justifies an address or proposer. It ought in fairness to be borne in mind that the objectionable passages occurred not in a considered written judgment, but in an oral charge (*sic*) to a jury delivered at the conclusion of a lengthened and somewhat heated trial; and the very form in which it was couched shows that the learned judge was not informed as to what took place. His Majesty’s Government will always uphold the right of the judiciary to pass judgment even on the Executive, if it thinks fit; but that being the right of the judiciary, it is all the more necessary that

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it should guard itself against pronouncements upon issues involving grave political consequences which are not themselves being tried."

After certain other Members had asked questions the Prime Minister said:

"I had better not be drawn into a discussion. The importance of the point is this, and I think every Member of the House will recognize it, that evidence may have been laid regarding certain matters in the trial, but the main point and purpose of the trial did not concern itself with the *obiter dicta* which the learned judge let fall in the course of charging the jury, and those words were calculated to have a very serious effect upon Indian public opinion; and for these reasons I have couched the answer in the way I have done."

The speech fills one with amazement. A Prime Minister is a very busy man with but little time, one supposes, to devote to the reading of the records of a long trial. But he speaks of "issues not themselves being tried"; and of "*obiter dicta*". Why did not his advisers tell him of the Defendant's particulars of justification, which alleged 'atrocities' on the part of both General Dyer and Sir Michael? Why did they not point out to him that during the trial Defendant's Counsel made this statement:

"We say that what General Dyer did (firing on a crowd of natives) was an atrocity from any point of view in the situation of the Punjab then. And we say that it was an atrocity which had the consent of Sir Michael O'Dwyer before it was committed, and his practical approval afterwards. One of the

questions which will have to be considered is whether the condemnation of General Dyer was right or wrong. Many facts are available now which were not available before."

What could be clearer than this; and how could the judge avoid pronouncing on these matters in his summing-up?

Again, it is said that the 'objectionable passages' did not occur in a considered written judgment. We Sessions judges know how many hours of anxious consideration may precede a summing-up.

There is the reference to a 'heated' trial. If the suggestion was that the judge himself had become heated and was not properly weighing his words, it is sufficient to say that the summing-up took two days to deliver, and those in Court will remember the calm, impassive figure of Mr. Justice McCardie.

It is said that the judge "was not informed as to what took place". Yet, in a trial which continued on and off for nearly five weeks he had heard the evidence of more than one hundred witnesses, and had studied the Hunter report and the correspondence which had passed between the Government of India and the Secretary of State. What more would he require to know?

Doubtless the Prime Minister's position was a very difficult one. He was concerned to defend his Minister, Mr. Montagu; and because of the Reforms scheme he was anxious to placate the Indian *Intelligentsia*. But he overlooked the fact that in India there is no such thing as 'public opinion' in the sense in which we in this country understand it. Among so many millions of utterly ignorant people of divers races and creeds how can there be? It is easy enough by spreading false rumours to stir up racial feeling,

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but that is not true public opinion. There are many millions who have never yet heard of Dyer or Amritsar or the Rowlatt Act. There are many millions who might make the pathetic admission of the witness in the Lahore case: "I do not know who Gandhi is; he has cost me my livelihood."

There is little more to tell. Subscribers from all over the world subscribed for General Dyer some £28,000, but he died a broken man.

Those of us who served under Sir Michael O'Dwyer know well that anyone charging him with the commission of an atrocity would be either a liar or a fool.

As regards General Dyer one must decide for oneself whether he acted in error from a misconception of his duty, or whether he rightly checked a great rebellion.

His *bona fides* and his honour have never been questioned; and from childhood he was a good friend of Indians.

## CHAPTER XIX

THE last two chapters have been somewhat grim: a lighter one is indicated.

Just as for several years I collected samples of the wit of Thomas Atkins, so for many years I collected specimens of the humour of that unconscious humorist of the East, the Indian Babu. By nature he is the reverse of war-like ("Oh Sir, I am a verree fearful man!"); but sometimes in the Secret Service he will bravely risk his life after the manner of Kim's obese friend 'Hurree Babu'.

Years ago in his book—*Twenty-one Days in India*—Aberigh Mackay likened the Babu to a 'grotesque Brocken shadow', and further opined that a virtuous cow-hippopotamus might by metempsychosis, equipped with patent-leather shoes and English, become a Babu. I have met but few of the species who resembled shadows; and perhaps my estimate of them is rather higher than was that of the amusing writer. To my mind the Babu is a most efficient clerk, and often an extremely good fellow. I have had many such friends.

His command of our queerly-spelt language compels our respect, even if at times it provokes us to laughter. With well-chosen words and phrases he helps to lighten the monotony of our official life in India. Like Mrs. Malaprop he is a firm believer in 'a nice derangement of epitaphs': and not infrequently he is a poet of florid imagination who above all things and at all costs must have his rhyme.

The classic example of Babu humour is a booklet published in 1873. It has passed through some eight editions and can be obtained from Messrs. Thacker,

Spink and Co. of Calcutta. I still possess a copy, my previous copies having been stolen by my friends. It is a Memoir of the life and death of Mr. Justice Onoocool Chunder Mookerjee, formerly a judge of the High Court of Calcutta, and was written by his nephew. The book is a gem because it was never intended to create laughter. From it I fancy that Anstey drew some of his material for 'A Bayard from Bengal'. It was offered by its writer as a '*tributum*' to the Bengal Chief Justice of those days.

The very first words of the booklet delight us and arouse our hunger for further reading:—

"Let me hold my *Penna* after a few months, to write the memoir of the individual above named: but *quid agis?* if anyone put me such a query, I will be utterly thrown into a great jeopardy and hurley-burley, and say — a fool of myself!"

We learn that "when a boy Onoocool was filamentous, but in the course of time became plump as a partridge." At school he was mild of temper, never having a "snip-snap with any of his college boys": but "this singular sheepishness—so ungraceful in a boy—endeared him to all his teachers."

Even in his youth he must have had a wonderful flow of language. On one occasion he went to look at a monument, and received a blow on the head "which rendered him impercipient for a few moments". I grieve to say that the blow had been administered by a "Cyclopean English sailor"; but after little Mookerjee had harangued him for "more than an hour" on the brotherhood of man, "the savage heart of the sailor was moved".

He worked hard, and "by dint of nude energy erected a vantage ground above the level of his

countrymen"; so that he was able to help his family when they were "threatened with Barmecide feast". He obtained a post in an office, and on leaving it received a certificate "testifying to his *cui bono* in the post he had held."

He began to study the law, "for none can be great Impromptu"; and when his earnings as a lawyer enabled him to still further help his family, he was able to "restore happiness and sunshine to those sweet and well-beloved faces on which he had not seen the soft and fascinating beams of a simper for many a grim-visaged year." But he was never known to "illude the Court with fiddle-faddle arguments." On the contrary, he "very well understood the boot of his client, for which he would carry a logomachy as if his wheel of fortune depended upon it, or even more than that."

Elevated to the Bench, he continued his generosity and "did bleed freely, but he was not a Leviathan on the ocean of liberality."

"His dress was unaffected," and his nephew never saw him "in a dress fine as a carrot fresh scraped, but *esto perpetuum* in Pantaloon" and other appropriate garments.

Death claims us all in time; and one day Mr. Justice Mookerjee felt "debile", and left the court "like a toad under the harrow". It was a case of "paralysis and *ruptum* of a blood vessel". Doctors did what they could "with their puissance and knack of medical knowledge, but it proved after all as if to milk the ram!" He remained "*sotto voce* for a few hours and then went to God at about 6 p.m." His poor wife "weltered" on the ground, and his children "did *fondre en larmes*". The house "presented a second Babel or a pretty kettle of fish—and whole Bengal was in lachrymation."

I must really stop quoting, but I should have loved to have met Onoocool's nephew!

My own collection of Babuisms is not to be despised. In presenting it I have endeavoured to avoid repeating the more generally known examples, though I am tempted to recall the letter of the gentleman who wrote that his family "consisted of two adults and three adulteresses."

In the East petitions and requests to those in authority have been customary since time immemorial: and it is natural, therefore, that the unconscious humour of the Babu should find its main outlet in written petitions and letters, the headings of which often form not the least amusing portions of them.

Probably more than one English lady in India has received a letter beginning 'Holy Mother'; but it was reserved for a well-known general, who was at the time head of the Mule Transport Corps at Simla, to be addressed as 'Almighty Ass-Master'. Equally quaint was a letter sent to a certain deputy commissioner in the Punjab, which commenced:—'My Lord, my saviour and my what-not,' and concluded with 'May the Almighty give you everlasting L.S.D.'

'Most Becile Sir' was a mode of address calculated, at any rate, to remove from the mind of the recipient any lurking suspicion as to his imbecility.

Our friend the Babu, anxious to obtain some post in an office, may possibly begin his petition with the assertion that in attending to his duties he has always been 'punctual as a tick'. Undue modesty is not in the nature of his composition; and he will go on to detail his numerous virtues and accomplishments, not omitting to mention how 'on the advent of the Great War' he 'took to the sword, and became clerk in Military Accounts Department.'

He invariably has a large number of relations dependent on him—his ‘family members’—and it may be that he will inquire ‘how on this exiguous salary’ he can ‘make the two ends of his grandmother meet’. The question would seem to be unanswerable?

It is his policy to assume that something will be done for him; and he will write to his patron:

‘Honoured Sir,—During my father’s lifetime having been wel-petted and wel-breaded, I now knock at your honour’s mercy clean and clothed in white. In short, I depend on you and God, having no cousin or other relation.’

On one occasion an Indian student anxious to display his knowledge of English when applying for a Government post, submitted a brief essay. It was entitled ‘The Natural History of the Bugs: not to be found in any of the Books.’ Among other things it contained the interesting piece of information that “if a Man were put in a Box or a Basket with the Bugs, he would immediately become sick upon. And the more of Bugs in the basket, the more of sickness would jump upon.”

Then there was the petition of a man who, enlisting in a regiment, found himself set to do office-work on account of his knowledge of English. He happened to be rather hirsute in appearance. Preferring soldiering to clerking, he wrote a letter to his C.O. asking for more manly employment and added: ‘Your Honour will remember me. I am the bastard with *long hairs*.’ He did not, of course, mean to cast any slur upon his own parentage: he had heard the word used as a term of depreciation, and wished to be very humble!

The letter of a clerk of an Indian firm of tailors to a customer who had complained that his breeches,

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instead of being patched inside and fine-drawn, had been repaired with a large circular patch of bright-coloured hairy flannel applied to the outside, ran as follows:

“We warn your Honour that if trousers be washed, the flannel of new seats will fade to old colour. But if your Honour does not approve new flannel in old seats, we will remove it and return the trousers *without seats*.”

Curious misunderstandings of English words were those of the gentleman who explained that he had at present no son, because his wife was “impregnable”, and of the Indian veterinary surgeon who wrote:

“I have brought the horse time and again for your Honour’s perusal. I think he is prone to suckle wind.”

The description of a lady as “a female woman of the opposite sex” is perhaps surpassed in excellence by the description of a baker of English bread as “a European Loafer”.

Often, of course, mistakes will arise simply from a misunderstanding of ordinary English modes of expression, as in the case of the Babu who entered in a lady’s application for a passport under the heading for “Distinctive Marks” the extraordinary description “hairy knees”. It subsequently appeared that the lady, justly proud of her luxuriant tresses, had suggested “hair to my knees” as one of the characteristics by which she might be identified.

“Kindly let me know when you are passing through Amritsar, so that I may *reach at* the station,” might have aroused some doubt in the mind of the recipient,

had not the spelling precluded any ambiguity as to the writer's meaning.

Letters concerned with domestic matters afford a fruitful hunting-ground for Babuisms, and are frequently somewhat embarrassing. The present writer has before him a letter to a friend which includes this remarkable passage:

"I would suggest of your trying to find a respectful lady for marriage, because it is absolutely necessary for everybody to hand over charge of the world to his sons; and in the absence of a wife children are not expected."

"Best *salāms* to the prolonged baby" occurred in a letter of congratulations to a young couple recently blessed with twins; but whether the writer intended to congratulate them on the advent of the "longed-for baby", or meant to imply that twin babies placed end to end were greater in length than a single gift from the Stork we shall never know.

My next anecdote concerns a newly-married pair to whom a Babu friend sent a Christmas card. Whether there had yet been any fruit of the marriage he did not know; but he wanted to be on the safe side and not to miss out anyone. So he sent his card to Mr. and Mrs. Smith "*with child*."

No one save a Bengali student could have written (in a college magazine): "With a last lingering look at the abode of his birth he gave motion to his legs with a gesticulation rather automatically without aim or destination." The person in question must have possessed curious extremities, for further on we read: "The former giant in structure, but short in sight, saluted his friend with a dash of his legs."

The excuse of a firm of polo-stick makers for non-

compliance with an order is amusing: "The delay is due to the death of our grandmother, which is to be excused. For when the Maker calls the Make, what can we be doing?"

Asked by a visitor to a gaol why a certain prisoner was looking specially depressed, the gaoler's reply was worthy of record. "Sir," he said, "this man is to be hanged to-morrow; so to-day he is peevish."

The mail-bag of the Collector of a District often yields strange communications, usually anonymous. One writer may complain of the conduct of certain rowdy young students "engaged in a bacterious plot to tease women and young chaps," adding the warning "if these young bacteria are not stunted in their infancy, they will be highly perilous." Another anonymous correspondent may request that action be taken on the ground that:

"We have prayed for this man's destruction, but not a single hair of his head has become curved. Having sucked our blood, he now proceeds to squeeze our bones. If you do not believe me, then cut my throat and the throat of all my family members with your own fair hands."

The railway station Babu occasionally provides pabulum for the diligent collector of Babuisms. He dearly loves the railway regulations, which he knows by heart; but he can be relied upon to get over a difficulty.

"How much shall I have to pay for freight?" was asked by an inquirer anxious to despatch by train an artificial leg sewn up in sacking. "There is no special provision for such goods, sir," was the reply, "but I am booking as musical instrument."

It was during a more than usually sultry Indian

“hot weather” that I received from a railway Babu a note regarding a haunch of venison sent by some “well-wisher”. “Sir,” wrote the stationmaster, “a *deer corpse* has arrived for you. Please take delivery, as perishable articles are to be auctioned after ten days.”

These kindly offerings sometimes come with strange covering-letters. A lady who had expressed a liking for Malta blood-oranges received a fine basketful from a firm with which she dealt, along with this note: “Dear Madam, we are sending you some of our bloody Maltes.”

Our Babu can at times be very callous. Seated comfortably in a stationary railway-carriage chewing his *pān*, one of them watched a man walking backwards whilst he waved farewell to some friends in a departing train. The man fell off the end of the platform and lay stunned. It never occurred to our Babu to go to his aid. “Perhaps he thought platform was!” was his comment, and he went calmly on with his chewing.

Among Babuisms from the law-courts are these: “My opponent, feeling that he had gone too far, had cleverly burnt his *boots*,” and “My client is not a shuttlecock running from pillow to post.” Of an accused person who was making a rapid escape it was said that he was running away “tooth and nail”. The written argument of counsel for the defence in an assault case contained this paragraph:

“The slight and trifling injuries of this Hindu lady indicate that they were not caused by the appellants, my clients. They seem to be the result of blows given by brotherly hands (or hand) who had maternal love behind to dwindle the face of anger.”

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times add to one's collection. In the advertisement column of a newspaper we find a Rajput Hindu widower seeking "a lady of kind habits, healthy and most attractive, without any kind of sorrow. Widow from infancy or unmarried woman will do."

Another advertiser makes inquiries for "respectable Parents having an Intelligent Noble Daughter" for "an enlightened Son-in-Law (England-returned). Sure Millions income. Will prove rare Son-in-Law, really True-Companion."

A cutting from an Indian newspaper describing the suppression of a riot informs the reader that "soon the stick of the Deputy Commissioner was hobnobbing gaily from cranium to cranium"; and a well-known Calcutta paper, expressing a hope that Lord Reading would take the measure of the "Simla bureaucrat", remarked: "May God *giftie-gie* our Viceroy that he may cool the *hyperheat* of the men on the spot."

Another cutting reads:

"Our people have been *cousined* by Mr. Morley with the lillipop of Council Reforms—a scheme which has been kicked to and fro like a shuttlecock for years."

In a reported speech of a well-known extremist politician occurs the remark:

"This game has been played too long. It is the story of the wolf devouring the lamb on the pretext that the latter kicked up too much dirt in a boat in mid-river."

A somewhat drastic suggestion was that of a speaker on the Habitual Offenders Bill, who declared: "If a man be convicted of a crime, let him be nailed to the counter."

It is, however, in matters ceremonial and in his poetry that the unconscious humour of the Babu appears in all its glory. "Tell Father We Are Happy", was the legend over a triumphal arch which much amused our late King George and Queen Mary when they visited Lahore as Prince and Princess of Wales during their tour of India in 1905, in addition to which there was a large "Welcome" over the European cemetery.

"God bless Mr. Smith!" was the gratifying expression of good wishes on an arch erected in honour of the visit of a popular deputy commissioner to a small town; and further on as a compliment to his lady, "God help Mrs. Smith!"

Sometimes the City Fathers with a commendable desire to save public funds will exercise thrift in the matter of the decorations; and on one occasion an arriving governor of the Bombay Presidency (who landed a few days after his predecessor owing to illness had been obliged to sail for England) was somewhat astonished at being greeted with "God Speed You Home To Your Friends!" With an eye to economy the City Fathers had made the same set of decorations serve for both the departure and arrival.

It was, however, not economy but the narrowness of a street which produced the following gem. When the triumphal arch was designed, it was found that there would be insufficient space for the word "Welcome"—or rather, "Well Come", as the intention was to spell it. The arriving notability, therefore, found himself gazing with amazement at this legend strung across the thoroughfare:

"We Wish you Hearty W.C."

When, like Mr. Wegg, our friend the Babu "drops  
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into poetry", his main endeavour is to find a rhyme—a rhyme of some sort! The classic illustration of his fertility of resource in this direction is the verse—

Oh come, my Love, oh come!  
Of Love you are the sum!  
I love you to Heart's bot-*tom*!  
Come!

But there are other examples almost equally refreshing. Impelled by the divine afflatus to write on "Loyalty" during the war, the headmaster of a Government Normal School perpetrated twenty verses, four of which may be quoted as specimens of the remainder of the poem:

"Inspired by theme of noble strain  
I tune my harp to Homeric song  
To sing of him whose glorious reign  
Is meant to redress human wrongs.

Phœbus in his daily round,  
Coursing o'er his vast empire  
With shining rays is ever found  
Moves fast and free, but won't retire.

What if tonguesters foam and boil,  
Empty windbogs (*sic*) know not toil,  
They no children of the soil,  
Crush these vermins in the coil.

Rule Britannia let us say,  
That God on our King George may  
In his usual merciful way  
Send sunshine and happy days."

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The poet's knowledge of punctuation was, unfortunately, not on a par with his loyalty.

Eastern hospitality to a guest is proverbial; and when Mr. Montagu visited India the bard of an Indian State, where a great shooting party had been arranged, announced that:

The animals, too, in honour of Secretary of State,  
Were ready to sacrifice their lives—*at any rate!*

This assurance on behalf of the animals may have been due to mere poetic license, but the bard achieved his rhyme.

Ceremonial occasions, such as garden-parties to retiring officials without the Babu poet would be but dull and dismal functions; and what greater praise could a retiring deputy commissioner desire than this?

“Search well in every nation,  
Such men you will find with caution!  
Do not run hither and thither,  
Search only in your liver!”

“Heart” does not rhyme with “thither”, so the poet was obliged to employ a synonym.

At another festivity, printed on cotton pocket-handkerchiefs and handed round to the principal guests, was this effusion:

“Each year God bless you more and more  
With Garden Parties from his bounteous store!”

But without a doubt the gem of the present writer's collection is a fragment from a poem written on “The Death of her late Majesty, Queen Victoria”. If

ever there were a queen beloved of her people, that queen was Victoria, and the people the people of India. At the present day, even in the most truculent organs of extremist opinion, the late Queen-Empress is often referred to as "the Good Queen", or "the Great White Queen"; and we must believe that the poet wrote with the utmost respect and reverence when he penned the extraordinary couplet:

"Dust to dust, and ashes to ashes!  
Into the Tomb the Good Queen dashes!"

Anything more foreign to the habits of the Great White Queen it would be difficult to imagine, but the poet required a rhyme.

After all, our Babu's English mistakes are no more more extraordinary than those made by English people (especially, ladies!) attempting to speak Hindustani—or for the matter of that, any foreign language.

A classic French example is the one about the gentleman who, anxious to warn a lady that someone sitting behind her might be listening to her conversation, said in a whisper: "*Prenez garde, Madame! Votre derrière écoute!*"

Then there is the delightful story of the Vicereine who was presenting walking-sticks to several Indian gentlemen. Round the group she went handing them out and remarking graciously: "*Ham ko do! Ham ko do!*" What she intended to say was: "I have pleasure in giving you this": but what she did say was: "Give it me"!—so that the bewildered recipients were wondering what they were supposed to do with their presents.

## CHAPTER XX

NOWADAYS, when to the railway train and the fast ship have been added the motor-car and the aeroplane, it is interesting to consider how leisurely were the means of travel one hundred years ago. People now flit backwards and forwards to India in a few days' time, and think nothing of it.

Captain Hervey, who left England in 1833, records in his diary how it took him four months to reach Madras by way of the Cape: and the journey was not accomplished with any too much comfort. Earlier than that, starting in the hottest time of the year, my great-grandmother had occupied nine and a half months in travelling from Calcutta to Meerut, a distance which can now be covered in a railway-train in no great number of hours.

The journal from which the following extracts are taken was kept by my great-grandmother with the idea of amusing her children. To the general reader it will be of interest to learn that she was an aunt of William Makepeace Thackeray, the novelist.

Before her marriage with John Talbot Shakespear of the Bengal Civil Service she had been Emily Thackeray, one of the twelve children of William Makepeace the elder, and a granddaughter of Doctor Thomas Thackeray, Archdeacon of Surrey and at one time Head Master of Harrow. Those were the days of large families; and one may note in passing that the Archdeacon, who was born in 1693, had himself possessed a quiver filled with as many as sixteen arrows.

The Governor-General of those days was Lord

Moira, whose tenure of office in India lasted from 1813 to 1821, and who was created Marquis of Hastings in 1817. He was accompanied on this tour by his wife—the Countess of Loudoun—and three of their children.

The events chronicled in the journal occurred during the latter half of the year 1814 and the first half of 1815—years notable for the abdication of Napoleon, the publication of *Waverley* and the battle of Waterloo.

Perhaps the main impression left by a perusal of the journal upon the mind of the present writer is one of intense admiration for the spirit and stout-heartedness of our ancestors of those times, especially as regards the feminine portion of them. One feels that compared with them we are a race of pygmies grumbling unduly at the lateness of a train, a mishap to a motor-car, the misbehaviour of an electric-fan, or the waywardness of a refrigerator. In 1814 the highest in the land journeyed across India as best they might by means of boats, elephants, camels, bullock-carts, or on horseback, accepting cheerfully the risks and discomforts inseparable from such modes of travel. There were no “hot-weather” hill-stations, and “a profusion of ice” was something to be recorded in a diary.

On June 20th my great-grandmother, with her husband, three of her children, and Mr. Macnabb, her husband’s assistant, set sail from Calcutta with a favourable breeze upon the *Hooghly* for Chinsurah (formerly an old Dutch settlement), where they were to await the arrival of the Governor-General’s fleet. One of the children was afterwards Colonel Sir Richmond Shakespear, who died in India after a long and distinguished career during which he had enjoyed only a fortnight of leave in England.

The arrival of the fleet at Chinsurah must have made an imposing display. The flotilla consisted of four hundred boats. The Governor-General and Lady Loudoun were on board the *Soonamookee* (I retain the old-fashioned spelling of Indian names) which was painted dark green and ornamented with gold; and among its comforts were green morocco furniture and marble baths in white and gold. A pinnace of almost equal splendour conveyed his lordship's children and their governess. There was a third pinnace to serve as a banqueting-hall and audience boat, accompanied by two State barges for the band and kitchen.

On July 12th the fleet reached Moorshedabad (once the capital of Bengal) one hundred and twenty miles from Calcutta, where the Nawab of Bengal offered his regal hospitality. The Governor-General and his *entourage* were personally escorted ashore by the Nawab in a State barge with the figure of a peacock at the prow, paddled by forty men in scarlet. On landing a procession took place through lines of troops with elephants, camels, and horses richly caparisoned. A banquet followed; and the Nawab, who wore magnificent ornaments of diamonds, emeralds, and pearls, somewhat astonished his guests by the number of *hookahs* which he smoked during the repast, each being presented to his mouth by a *hookaburdar*—"it being too great an exertion as well as condescension for a man of his rank to support it himself."

After the usual exchange of presents between the Governor-General and the Nawab, the ladies of the party paid a visit to the *zenana* apartments. There they were entertained by the Nawab's mother, "a cheerful old lady with the remains of beauty and very courteous manners", but with her son's inveterate habit of *hookah* smoking. Further entertainments of

great magnificence took place at another palace across the river in the shape of *nautches*, pantomimes, and fireworks.

Continuing the journey, the fleet passed Razmehal (the capital of Bengal until its burning in the year 1638) and reached Mushooa, where a fine tiger was shot. At the Colgong Rocks on the Ganges my great-grandmother's boat was driven with such violence against the bank that the rudder was broken, necessitating a halt until a new rudder could be made and fitted; and the dog-boat containing a great number of valuable dogs was lost. To my great-grandfather, "a keen sportsman," it may have been some consolation that the delay enabled him to shoot a number of fine alligators.

After the refitting of a new rudder, haste was made to catch up with the rest of the fleet which had left Bhagulpore. The Bhagulpore Hills had formerly been inhabited by lawless banditti; and it is worth mentioning, as characteristic of British methods of government in even those far-off days, that thirty years before those lawless people had been tamed by the conciliatory measures of Mr. Cleveland, the Collector of those parts. Cleveland died in 1784, almost deified by the inhabitants, at the early age of 29; and in these days, when Indian extremist politicians are apt to agitate regarding the "oppressive policy" pursued in India, it is pleasing to record that on the monument erected to his memory there is mention of how "*without bloodshed or the terrors of authority, employing only the means of conciliation, confidence, and benevolence*" he succeeded in attaching the wild men of the hills to the British Government "by a conquest over their minds; the most permanent, as the most national, mode of dominion."

The next important port of call was Patna, the

capital of the Province of Behar. A visit was paid to the Gholah, a building in the form of a huge beehive, which had been erected many years before by the Government to serve as an immense grain-store against times of famine, but which had never been used. "The heat inside the building was almost insufferable": it must, indeed, have been in August!

The Governor-General held a Durbār at which the presents offered by Maharaja Miter Jeet included elephants, horses, deer, some rare birds and an ivory sedan-chair. Among other places visited was the site of a monument raised to the memory of the Europeans massacred on October 5, 1763, by the orders of the notorious Cossim Ali, the deposed Nawab of Bengal. The actual perpetrator of this outrage was a German, who had deserted the Government's service for that of the Nawab. He was known by the name of "Sombre" on account of his gloomy countenance, which name had been corrupted by the Indians into "Sumroo". Out of one hundred and fifty persons one only was spared—the surgeon. An interesting account of "Sumroo's" Indian wife occurs later in the journal.

By way of Dinapore the journey was continued to Buxar, where Cossim Ali and Sujah ud Doulah had combined in 1764, in a last effort against the British arms; and from there to Gazeepore, where "that great and good man Lord Cornwallis" had died during his progress up-country in 1805, and had been buried by his own request.

Towards the end of August the party arrived at Benares, then, as now, one of the most sacred of the Hindu cities. There was an interesting visit to the observatory built by the Emperor Mahomed in 1718; and also to the holy "Vishesher" temple, regarding which my great-grandmother records that some

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enormously fat Brahmins, who presided in the temple, appeared to her to be "greater objects of curiosity than any part of it."

It was at Benares that the stout-hearted lady of the journal had a somewhat unpleasant experience. She was being driven in a buggy one evening, and her charioteer chose what appeared to be, although under water, the better of two roads. Suddenly the horse entirely disappeared in a large hole, and the occupants of the buggy were shot out into the water. "This," she remarks, "was not very agreeable, but made me laugh a good deal. The only inconvenience I sustained was my wet drapery and the loss of my shoes."

Before leaving Benares Lord Moira received a visit from Amreet Rao, a Mahratta chief, who came attended by a retinue of thirty thousand men—a fitting escort for a descendant of Sivaji, who founded the Mahratta nation in 1660.

Early in September the river was crossed to Ramnaghur, where the Rajah of Benares, "one of the most important, and certainly the fattest chief of his time" had a palace. At an interview with his Ranee my great-grandmother acted as interpreter.

At Chunar the already extensive baggage of the Governor-General received a further accretion in the shape of "a bath made from a solid block of stone of immense size", the handiwork of "an invalid sergeant". While there my great-grandfather managed to procure the release of an unfortunate native tailor who had been for twenty years a prisoner in the fortress, and the nature of whose offence had been forgotten.

Allahabad was reached on September 21st, and the arrival was marked by a visit from Prince Jehangir, the second brother of the King of Delhi. There is a note in the journal regarding the immense gathering

of people held every twelve years at the confluence of the Jumna and Ganges, when "numbers voluntarily sacrifice their lives under a belief that whatever they desire at the moment of self-immolation will hereafter be realised." There is also a reference to the old Indian superstition that a third river, invisible and very sacred, called the "Surrosutee", joins the confluence at this spot.

During the stay in Allahabad a visit was paid to the tomb of Sooltan Khoosroo, eldest son of the Emperor Jehangir, who rebelled against his father, and was murdered by his brother Shahjehan in 1621. The interior of the mausoleum is reputed to contain the *panja*, or print of the five fingers of one hand of Mahammed the Prophet impressed upon a stone in a wall.

In view of the approaching end of the journey by water "a most complete camp equipage" had been sent by the Nawab of Lucknow to escort the Governor-General to that place. A very handsome suite of tents had been pitched; and there were State palanquins, beds covered with gold and silver, and furniture richly embroidered. There were five and twenty elephants with superb gold and silver *howdahs*, horses magnificently caparisoned and camels remarkable for their speed and beauty. It is interesting to note that in spite of all this Oriental magnificence and display, "the lower orders invariably express their regret that the 'Company' do not take possession of this territory. They complain that under their own Government there is no security, and no man is sure of his own property."

The journey by water ended on October 8th at Cawnpore—at that time the Grand Military Depot of the Upper Provinces—and a halt of some ten days was made to facilitate preparations for the journey by land and for the visit of the Nawab of Lucknow.

This potentate made his appearance with true Oriental splendour. He was preceded by innumerable men bearing little silken flags, on which were embroidered in gold and silver, his arms and devices. Then followed the *sowaree* (escort) on State elephants and camels adorned with the most sumptuous trappings. State palanquins next appeared, followed by gold and silver mace-bearers and a numerous body-guard. At length came the Nawab in an embossed golden *howdah* on a noble elephant, whose legs were embellished with many costly gold and silver ornaments. Behind the Nawab were two *choureeburdars* waving *chourees* of golden peacock's feathers; and an umbrella (the insignia of royalty) of blue satin embroidered with gold and silver was supported over his head. He was accompanied by his sons and brothers and the nobles of the Court also riding on elephants. A huge following of spare elephants, led horses, State camels, horsemen, a chariot and a barouche closed the procession.

At the State banquet there were varieties of "English and Hindostanee dishes, breads and confectionery and ice in great abundance." The Nawab wore a high Mogul cap of black velvet entirely covered with diamonds and emeralds of great value. His dress was in imitation of the English fashion, "by no means becoming to a native of India. It consisted of a scarlet shawl made nearly in the style of a coat trimmed with gold. Round his waist was a *cummerbund* of figured shawl. He wore a neckcloth, boots and inexpressibles."

After much ceremonial and a round of entertainments the land journey from Cawnpore to Lucknow commenced on October 21st. The Governor-General's suite and staff consisted of some six and thirty adults and fifteen children, with an escort of a squadron of

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cavalry and a battalion of infantry. The total number of souls in camp was fifteen thousand; so the line of march extended for many miles. The baggage of this vast concourse was carried on elephants, camels and carts; my great-grandfather's allowance being eight elephants, thirty camels and four carts, together with thirty-eight bearers, twelve coolies, and ten men for the tents.

Camp discipline appears to have been strict. The "General Alert" beat at 4.30 a.m., and an hour later the "Assembly", after which a start was made by torchlight. The crisp morning air inhaled from the backs of the elephants had a most astounding effect upon the appetites of the youthful members of the party for their breakfast.

It is interesting to learn that in those days the camp of even the Governor-General was not immune from thieves. In spite of strong guards "the alarm was usually given once or twice before morning of thieves"—light-fingered gentry who after oiling their naked bodies would cut through the canvas walls of the tents and steal the bed-clothes off a sleeper.

Four days after leaving Cawnpore, Lord Moira, escorted by the eldest son of the Nawab, made his entry into Lucknow. Full details of the imposing procession are given, a quaint touch being added by the classing of certain officials as "Senior Merchants". The procession passed through the city amid the multitudes gathered in the streets and on the housetops—"nautch girls and musicians being stationed on the porticos and verandahs of all the respectable-looking habitations"! Largesse was scattered among the crowd, and "the poor old women were unmercifully attacked whenever they happened to pick up a rupee. They, however, always made a stout resistance; and either came off victorious, or after a tough battle

compromised the matter by dividing the spoil with their antagonists."

There followed the inevitable banquet ("a profusion of ice" is chronicled) and a return banquet at the Residency at which the Nawab's youthful sons and grandson "did ample justice to the delicacies set before them until they fell asleep." The company included the Nawab's ten brothers, only one of whom was famous—"for the making of pickles and preserves with his own hands, and for having the best cook in India." At these banquets the Nawab's band was accustomed to discourse music—"several old French and English airs. Among the former I recognised Malbrook. Indeed, they appeared to be sadly in want of a new collection."

During his stay in Lucknow the Governor-General took up his residence in "Constantia", a house, or rather, a castle erected by General Martine, that extraordinary man who, a native of France, went out to India as a private soldier.

"He afterwards entered the service of the Nawab of Lucknow, Sujah ud Doulah, who gave him an appointment which laid the foundations of the enormous fortune which he amassed. His was a singular character. He maintained that it was within the power of every individual to make his fortune under any circumstances, and said that he should not despair were he set down upon a rock with two flints to rub against each other. He had an idea that he should be able to prolong his life beyond the ordinary period of human existence. He had amused himself by building and decorating the receptacle for his remains. This was an octagonal room built underground, in the centre of which was a plain white marble monument with an

inscription simply stating that he came out to India as a private soldier in such a year, and died on such a date a Major-General. Opposite the door of entrance is placed his bust, which is said to be a good resemblance. The features are strong and the countenance good. The effect of the mausoleum has been spoiled by the good intentions, but bad taste, of a friend who, desirous of showing his respect for the memory of the departed, had placed in niches four ridiculous figures of Grenadiers as large as life, their arms reversed and their heads reclining on their folded hands bewailing the loss of the departed hero. These weeping Sons of Mars were made of mud very gaudily painted. They were all manifestly from the same mould, and were fat uncouth figures which looked as if they were stuffed with cotton. There were lights constantly burning in the vault. The house itself was a strange medley of French, Dutch and Hindostanee architecture and embellishment. In short it beggared all description. I believe it was designed to represent a Gothic castle."

One of the Nawab's entertainments took the form of an elephant-fight, of which the lady of the journal was an unwilling witness:—

"Two large males were brought forward from opposite sides, each attended by a female. These noble animals had been previously enraged in a variety of ways; a stimulus which appeared unnecessary, for they immediately rushed at each other. The charge was tremendous. They attacked each other with their heads, tusks and trunks; and fought till one of them fled, when he was pursued by the other who with one blow precipitated him

to the earth. The combatants fought until one had disabled the other, or until both had suffered. They were with great difficulty separated by means of lighted squibs and by the aid of the females who enticed them away. To me it was highly distressing."

The Governor-General and Lady Loudoun gave a grand entertainment at "*Constantia*" in celebration of the peace concluded with France, my great-grandmother opening the ball; but the dancing soon ceased, as the English ladies were averse to "exhibiting before Indians, among whom dancing is entirely confined to *nautch-walas* or professional dancers."

A *cheeta* hunt took place in the Dilkoosha Gardens.

"The *cheeta* is a hunting leopard. Four of these animals were in succession slipped at deer, of which there were a great number in the park; but they were all unsuccessful. If the *cheeta* fails in his first effort to spring on his prey, he rarely makes a second attempt. Your two small brothers, who were with me on an elephant were not a little delighted to see the deer escape."

After the *cheeta* hunt there was a combat between fighting rams; but the children preferred seeing the two young rhinoceroses which "were perfectly tame and gentle and ate bread from the hands of several of the gentlemen."

The amusements of Oriental potentates at that period seem to have resembled those of the ancient Romans. There is a description of a tiger and buffalo fight:—

"A temporary enclosure of bamboo trellis

work had been erected in front of the veranda. Within this were four or five buffaloes and several pasteboard figures of men. When all was ready the cages of two tigers were opened. These fine animals appeared completely intimidated by the crowd and noise which surrounded them, and had to be frightened out of their cages by lighted squibs. Then one of them rushed out with a tremendous roar lashing his tail and sprang upon one of the painted figures and tore it to pieces. One of the buffaloes now made boldly up to charge him, but the tiger made a beautiful spring over the back of the animal. A second tiger had in the meantime issued from his cage, but proved even more cowardly than the first and slunk away into a corner. Presently an alarm was given that he had made his escape, and thousands of people were instantly seen flying in all directions rending the air with their shouts. It appeared, however, that the tiger was equally intimidated, and did no further injury than to knock over one or two individuals who happened to impede his progress. A bear was then produced. He came dancing out of his cage most awkwardly and ludicrously, made up to one of the figures, and after giving it a hearty hug took one of the feet into his mouth and renewed his dance. This excited peals of laughter from the beholders; but that which succeeded was by no means amusing. Several bulldogs were slipped at the poor dancing bear, pulled him down and dragged him across the stage, apparently tearing him to pieces in so shocking a manner that I retired into one of the rooms in disgust. The dogs were soon called off, and to my astonishment the bear just shook himself and began dancing again as merrily as ever."

The ladies paid a visit to the Nawab's *begums* in their *zenana*, where they found the Indian dresses "peculiarly becoming to the European complexion" and marvelled greatly at the petticoats, each composed of nineteen yards of cloth. They saw also in the palace the original oil-painting, the engraving is well known, representing a match of game-cocks between Asuf ud Doulah and Colonel Mordaunt. Amongst other curiosities were "several magnificent little clocks fashioned entirely of gold and precious stones which, had they been clean, would have been beautiful." Then there were the Nawab's elephant-carriages, a curricle and a buggy, the former of which was two storeys high and was drawn by a pair of elephants.

There were visits to the menagerie and the aviary; but to my great-grandmother's regret the former only contained a lioness. She had never seen a lion: and our English Zoo was not opened until some fourteen years later. "The Indian lion," she notes, "is common in the district of Saharunpore, but it is a very inferior animal to the African lion." Nowadays, the Indian lion is rapidly becoming extinct; and Lord Curzon refrained from adding a specimen to his *shikār* trophies.

After a halt at Lucknow of nearly three weeks the journey was resumed. The road lay past Bareilly, not far from the extensive Plain of Fattehgunje (the Place of Victory) where a battle had been fought between the British and Rohilla Powers in 1794. Further on at Rampore the Nawab of that small independent State, a descendant of the famous Rohilla Afghan chief, Fyzoolah Khan, paid a visit to the Governor-General accompanied by the inevitable elephants and a body of horsemen in armour.

At Moradabad Lord Moira received a deputation of nobles from the King of Delhi—"handsome men of

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fair, even florid, complexion, dressed in rich gold and silver cloths trimmed with fur—but uncouth in their manners and all so eager to be foremost that great confusion and crowding prevailed."

There was a day's tiger shooting, the line consisting of ninety-three elephants of which my great-grandfather, as an experienced sportsman, took command by his lordship's request. The bag was disappointing —two tigers, one of which was shot by Lord Moira.

It was now past the middle of December, and the journal contains several references to the cold, the temperature sometimes dropping to twenty-four degrees in the early morning, and the servants bringing in a snowball composed of the frost-rime scraped from the tops of the tents.

The Ganges was crossed on elephants, the crossing being a matter of some difficulty on account of the strong current and the large loose boulders in the bed of the river. Moreover, there were only eighteen boats at the ferry to transport the baggage of fifteen thousand persons along with the camels, horses, carts, carriages, bullocks, sheep and goats.

On Christmas Eve the travellers reached the sacred Hindu city of Hurdwar on the Ganges. A fine tiger was shot after he had gallantly attacked my great-grandfather's elephant, which "tossed him backwards and forwards from his fore to his hindlegs with as much ease as you would play with a shuttlecock."

On Christmas Day, after service at the headquarters church a trip on elephants was made to the Nepaul Dhoon, a great valley famous at the present day for its shooting. Another visit was to the tank, where holy Brahmins tend the huge sacred fish.

Next in the itinerary came Saharunpore, where the "Company owned extensive botanical gardens, which were started originally by the Governor, Zabita Khan,

father of the monster Gholam Kadir, who with his own hands put out the eyes of Shah Alum, King of Delhi." It was during the stay here that my great-grandmother received the sad news of the death of her brother, Lieutenant Thomas Thackeray, killed in action in Nepaul on December 27th. Lieutenant Thackeray had been severely wounded during the previous month, and died gallantly leading the Light Company of the 2nd Battalion of the 26th Bengal Native Infantry engaged in covering a temporary retreat of our troops repulsed in an attack on the stockades.

On January 2, 1815, the Jumna was crossed to Kurnaul, a military post belonging to Government in protected Sikh territory. Here the Rajah of Putteala, the principal Sikh State, visited the Governor-General along with his followers armed with matchlocks, swords and shields. The lady of the journal notes with interest the Sikh emblem of the quoit worn in the headdress, which could be converted into a missile weapon.

Passing through Jheend, an ancient city of another independent Sikh chief, which to certain Scotsmen of the party "seemed to bear some resemblance, though a despicable one, to the city of Edinburgh," Hansee was reached, another British military post. Here was stationed a corps of Native Irregular Cavalry under the command of the famous Colonel James Skinner. The diarist records:—

"They are a remarkably fine body of men. The uniform of the corps is yellow, made after the native fashion. Their turbans are red adorned with silver. They are in general handsome men, and are so well mounted that their horses are admirably broke in. Each man is armed with a

matchlock and sabre, and sometimes a spear. Their *nobuts* (kettle-drums) and trumpets preceded them. They first went through manœuvres after the European style in a manner highly creditable to their Commanding officer and themselves. After this they performed the Hindostanee exercise, which was exceedingly interesting. They rushed on to the charge without any regularity, shouting and screaming in a most wild and singular manner. They are capital horsemen, and after the review ended a number of them exhibited different feats of horsemanship. They came forward two and two at great speed, one pursuing the other, and fired at each other as they passed us, the first man firing backwards at his pursuer. Others armed with sabres threw themselves off their horses and hung on by the bridle and one stirrup, defending themselves with their sabres against their adversaries, who were armed with spears of amazing length which they sometimes shivered to pieces. A bottle was then placed on the ground, at which they fired *en passant* at full speed. Several of them hit it. A tent-pin was afterwards driven firmly into the ground. At this they rode at full speed armed with long spears, and with a jerk took up the tent-pin with the point of the spear. We were highly amused and gratified by all we saw."

For political reasons Lord Moira had decided not to enter Delhi; but certain of his party were able to do so, and the journal contains most interesting descriptions of the various palaces and tombs erected since the founding of the city (Shahjehanabad, as it was formerly called) by the Emperor Shahjehan in 1631, when he removed his Court from Agra on account of the intense heat. One of the sights was the

Chandnee Chouke, "supposed to be the finest street in India, with its central aqueduct and double avenue of trees." In recent years it was the scene of the dastardly attempt to assassinate Lord Hardinge of Penshurst with a bomb when on his way to a Durbār.

Shahjehan's palace was computed to have cost three-quarters of a million sterling, and on April 1, 1648, was the scene of a magnificent festival in celebration of the completion of the city. In 1761 it was looted by the Mahrattas, who spared the throne of polished marble inlaid with agates, cornelians, bloodstones and lapis lazuli, but tore down and coined into seventeen lakhs of rupees the ceilings of wrought silver richly gilt of the Private Hall of Audience. These same marauders picked the coloured stones from the walls, carried off the gold and silver pillars, and broke in three pieces a throne of solid rock crystal thinking that treasure might have been concealed within it.

The visitors were fortunate enough to see the King of Delhi taking his evening airing in the palace gardens:

"His Majesty appeared in his *tanjan* (palanquin) preceded by his *sowaree*, which was neither numerous nor splendid. His attendants, however, made the gardens resound with his titles and dignities, and when they approached called loudly to us to do homage to Akbar the Second, the Emperor of the World. He is an elderly man, his complexion is fair, his countenance benevolent and handsome, and his great beard renders it venerable. I could not look at this fallen representative of the House of Timoor without feeling mingled sentiments of sympathy and compassion. He wore a fur turban trimmed with gold, and was covered with shawls. He saluted us as he passed by putting his right

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hand to his breast, and sent his blessing to us and to the children who were with us."

It is noted in the journal that the monthly allowance made by the British Government for the support of the king and royal family was a lakh of rupees; and that the palace was computed to hold one thousand eight hundred persons, half of whom were females.

Among other interesting sights seen at Delhi was the *Junter Munter*, or Observatory, erected by Jeysing, Rajah of Jeynagur, some time after 1693 in the reign of Mahomed Shah. Jeysing reformed the calendar; and invented a set of astronomical instruments of brass. As these did not conform with his ideas of accuracy, he had others constructed of stone and lime of perfect stability; and the readings at Delhi were checked with those of similar instruments at Jeypore, Muttra, Benares, and elsewhere. These instruments, six in number, were of vast size—one of them, constructed of stone and named by Jeysing "The Prince of Dials", being 56 feet high and having a base of 104 feet.

In a small mosque of white marble was seen a coffin of stone said to have been made by the order of the Emperor Aurangzebe, with the idea of having his remains deposited in it and blown up to Heaven by means of a mine!

Delhi could hardly have been called at the time of the journal a literary centre. The only newspapers were manuscripts written in Persian, which literate persons read out in the streets to passers-by for a trifling remuneration.

The Jumna was again crossed to Meerut, and there my great-grandmother had an opportunity of meeting the Begum Sumroo at dinner with the Governor-General. This aged lady had had a chequered career.

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Reputed to be the daughter of a Mogul nobleman, though some writers say she was the daughter of an Arab's concubine, and others that she was a dancing-girl, she had embraced the Christian faith and had first married the infamous German adventurer known from his gloomy appearance as "Sombre" (Sumroo), the chief perpetrator of the European massacre at Patna in 1763. After his death in 1778 she passed through various vicissitudes while continuing to govern her small State with intrepidity and foresight; and then formed a second unfortunate matrimonial connection with a Frenchman, Le Vaisseau, who had been an officer in her service. This man's character was almost as bad as that of her first husband; and by the machinations of some Mahratta leaders she was deposed in favour of her stepson. Le Vaisseau destroyed himself; and soon afterwards her principality was restored to her by the British Government, to which she proved herself a faithful ally. A description of the *begum* is given:—

"She travelled in her coach and six attended by a numerous and noisy retinue of horsemen, elephants, camels, etc., and preceded by her *nobut* (kettle-drums). She was completely cased in shawls, and looked like a little old man. Her complexion is very fair; but her features are strong, and her countenance is an index of her masculine mind. Her hand and arm are still remarkable for their delicacy and beauty."

A strange mixture of cruelty and piety, the Begum seems to have experienced physical as well as mental tribulation. According to some narrators, though Sleeman in his 'Rambles' doubts the truth of the story, her enraged soldiery when their pay was greatly

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in arrears sat her astride a cannon heated by the midday sun in her muslin pyjamas. Funds were immediately forthcoming!

Crossing the Jumna yet again, to rejoin Lord Moira's camp, very heavy rains were encountered:

“The road was strewn with tents and baggage of every description; for the elephants and camels, finding the weight of their burthens doubled by being wet, made no scruple of shaking them off . . . Lady Loudoun told me that her tent had been for two days ankle-deep in mud, and she had actually had no resource but to take refuge in her palanquin and confine herself to it.”

By the middle of February the camp had reached Muttra, which Mahmoud of Ghazni had looted in 1018 carrying off idols of pure gold, their eyes composed of rubies and emeralds of great value. From there the march led to Futtehpore Sicree, built by the Emperor Akbar in 1570 and the birthplace of his son and successor, the Emperor Jehangir. In the opinion of the present writer this place, still in perfect preservation, but abandoned long ago on account of its bad water-supply, is surely one of the most interesting spots in India. One may still see “the curious throne supported by a pillar about ten feet high from which the Emperor used to overlook and direct the moves of the game of *pacheesi*, the pieces being represented by men on squares marked on the pavement of the court.”

Agra, the old seat of the Mogul Emperors, was reached towards the end of February; and the lady of the journal, like hosts of others before and after her, bowed down and worshipped the magic beauty of the Tāj built by the Emperor Shahjehan in memory

of his favourite wife. The Tāj took seventeen years to complete, and cost three-quarters of a million sterling—not one penny too much! My ancestress speaks of it as “standing in a superb Asiatic garden adorned with innumerable fountains and cascades, with broad stone terraces and luxuriant trees and shrubs.” This worthy setting to a gem was allowed to deteriorate after the time of my great-grandmother’s visit, and the present beauty of the Tāj Gardens is mainly due to the solicitude of Lord Curzon during his tenure of the viceroyalty.

There is a note in the journal concerning the powerful echo in the building:—

“I placed my piano within it, and it had the effect of a very full-toned organ. Slow and solemn airs were heard to great advantage.”

The long journey was now nearly at an end. Futtyghur, a large military cantonment on the banks of the Ganges, had been fixed upon by the Governor-General as his place of residence for the approaching hot season; and my great-grandfather was due at Meerut. There were farewell banquets and leave-takings; and on March 29, 1715, after what the lady of the journal describes as “a long and delightful journey undertaken in the company of interesting and amiable fellow-travellers”, her tour came to an end at Meerut. Let us hope that the sandstorms she encountered during the last few days were made up for by her arrival there “in time for an abundance of very fine strawberries”.

## CHAPTER XXI

AFTER my special work in connection with the troubles of 1919 was finished life passed uneventfully for me as Sessions Judge of Ambala. For the last time, exchanging the heat of the plains for the cool of the hills, I travelled from Kalka to Simla in the funny little train which winding in and out among the hills had long replaced the rattling two-horse *tonga* of my early days.

Whenever I travelled by it I was reminded of the story of the pious old Mohammedan who, wishing to say his prayers, was anxious to bend himself in the direction of Mecca the Holy. As the little train puffed him round and round the curves of the hills he was heard wailing disconsolately:—“*Bhai-ji! Bhai-ji! Mecca Sharif kidhar hai?*”—which being freely translated means:—“Oh, my brothers, where the blazes is Mecca the Holy?”

Once more in Simla I enacted the rôle which had gained me the title of ‘buffoon’ from the indignant litigious lady fourteen years before: that of the ‘Pirate King’ in the Gilbert and Sullivan opera. On this occasion the Viceroy’s daughter, Lady Anne Thesiger, made a most admirable ‘Ruth’.

In 1921 I began to think about retiring, and my wife and I decided to pay a last visit to Kashmir and then sail for England after one more Punjab ‘cold weather’. I borrowed again from my kindly Kashmiri official the cherry-orchard on the Dal lake; but our stay there was not as peaceful as before. It was the era of the Bright Young Things, who would invade the starlit beauty of the lake screaming and accomplishing their mixed bathing to the squawking of gramophones. It is, however, impossible utterly to vulgarise the loveliness of Kashmir.

Every place must in time tend to become modernised; but many of my old friends used to regret the days when there were no such things in Kashmir as shops and luxurious house-boats and electricity, and one just trekked up the long road from the plains and pitched one's tents and picnicked. The electric supply in place of smelly oil-lamps is certainly not a matter to grumble at, and Kashmir owes that to the genius of Colonel Joly de Lotbiniere, who harnessed the Jhelum river. His name, by the way, was responsible for the most quaint misspelling which I have ever seen in a native newspaper. He had been gazetted to a few months' leave, and a reprint of the official gazette appeared in the paper. But the native typesetter boggled at a name so strange, and running two bits of it together evolved:—‘Yolyde Hotbunero.’

When we went up to Gulmarg we had the good luck to see for a moment or two Nanga Parbat, one of the highest mountains of the Himalayas. We were standing looking out across the valleys at the magnificent snowy ranges, when suddenly a mist cleared high in the sky and there was Nanga Parbat towering above them all. I have never seen the Rockies, but I think that the Himalayas spoil one for most mountains. When I reached England some cousins drove me about Wales, and every now and then would ejaculate:—“There's Snowdon!” To me there seemed to be a sort of mole-hill protruding from the ground; but I should hate to try to climb it.

The exhilarating climate of Gulmarg impelled me to write more doggerel. Towards the end of July Mr. Gandhi had ordained for the whole of India, to take place on August the 1st, a holocaust of all imported garments including hats. This was to show his detestation of the ‘foreigner’, though the disciples of the Superman were enjoined to carry out the

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holocaust in 'a spirit of love'! Some of the words in the verses require explanation. A *dhoti* is a Hindu garment of cotton cloth; *khaddar* cloth is country-made cotton cloth, and by operating a *charkha* (spinning-wheel) for so many hours a day Mr. Gandhi calculated that the spinner might amass as much as fourpence. A *crore* is ten millions, and a *maund* weighs about eighty pounds. Here are the verses:—

*August the 1st, 1921*

**"INDIA EXPECTS THAT EVERY MAN THIS DAY  
WILL BURN HIS DHOTI."**

Brothers, Freedom's Day is nearer!  
Hail the Dawn of the New Era  
Purged by sacred fire!  
Give three cheers, three regular rousers:  
Gather round, and burn your trousers  
On the funeral pyre!

High and low, whate'er your stations,  
Set on fire your combinations;  
Let the rites begin!  
Liberty's alert Defenders,  
Char to atoms your suspenders,  
Do your *dhotis* in!

Manchester will mourn and grizzle  
While the pink pyjamas sizzle  
In the blazing vats:—  
Clothed in *khaddar* cloth (your best coats!)  
Burn the foreign devil's waistcoats  
And cremate your hats!

Learn the lesson Soul Force teaches!—  
While the flames consume your breeches,  
Cleanse your minds of wrath!

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Love your very souls inspiring,  
Heap a *crore* of *maunds* of firing  
On the hated cloth!

Where "Satanic" foes are lurking,  
Let them hear the *Charkhas charkhing*  
Where the Hughli flows!  
Home grown socks!—no need to buy 'em!—  
Earning annas four *per diem*!  
Downing all your foes!

Emulate the Ancient Sages:  
Nude, like Saints in bygone ages  
Far removed from Sin:  
"Burn your Boats" and breast the breakers!  
(Burn your Boots—by foreign makers!)  
That's the way to win!!

Sir Walter Lawrence, that lover and benefactor of Kashmir, who had been Private Secretary to Lord Curzon and Chief of Staff during their Royal Highnesses' tour in 1905, had always taken a kindly interest in my doggerel; so I sent him a copy and received a delightful letter from Balmoral. Later on to my amusement I learned that the late Sir William Meyer had shown a copy of it round the India Office as being a genuine 'call to arms' written by an Indian! Knowing well his rather sardonic humour, I imagine he must have been pulling the India Office leg.

On our way back we stayed for a while as the guests of Colonel Wyndham at the Residency in Srinagar, and ate enormous pears and green figs at all meals in the lovely garden. On the Jhelum just off-shore were moored the house-boats of General (now Field-Marshal) Sir William Birdwood, soon to become Commander-in-Chief in India. A staunch believer in physical fitness

ever since the days when he used to tramp all over Jakko in Simla before his morning's work, 'Birdie' saw to it that all occupants of the house-boats plopped into the river bright and early.

In the autumn of that year the Viceroy and Lady Reading paid Kashmir a visit; but I do not think that Kashmir was the scene of her famous *purdah* party.

As is well known, on the occasion of a *purdah* party every male person must be banished from the precincts. During the festivities there came a terrific thunder-storm, and a big marquee was in danger of being blown down, so a number of zealous A.D.C.'s came out of hiding and rushed to the rescue. This sudden advent of young men caused much perturbation among the younger *purdah* ladies; but some of the older ladies most tactfully saved the situation. They explained that the young men propping up the swaying marquee were "only His Excellency's eunuchs", and calm was restored.

I believe that for some time afterwards there was a difficulty about recruiting for the Viceregal Staff!

Leaving my wife behind to help to prepare the Residency for the coming visit of the Viceroy and Lady Reading, I headed for Hoshiarpur, my last station in India. I was not sorry to have done with Ambala, because shortly before my departure the walls of the Sessions Judge's bungalow had begun to crack in every direction, and huge cavities had appeared in the garden at the bottom of which we could hear water trickling. I had complained about this to the Public Works department, and had received a gleeful letter from the Engineer, who wrote: "We are hoping that we have at last located the lost Ambala water-supply!" As this presumably meant that the lost water-supply was located under my bungalow, I could see no special reason for rejoicing.

Hoshiarpur, where we spent our last few months, was a pleasant little station; and my wife took up there her work for the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals for which she and a friend had done so much in Lahore, and for which she now works so indefatigably in England. One or two amusing episodes occurred in connection with her work at Hoshiarpur. She had a special day in the week for visiting the veterinary hospital, and would find there wretched ponies and donkeys bandaged and with neat dressings on their sores. One day she made a surprise visit, and there was not an animal to be seen: they were all out at work! On one occasion a quaint suggestion was made by an Indian gentleman, who was a member of her committee. Since old times it has been a horrible practice in India (the practice is now punishable as an offence) to skin goats alive. By so doing another inch or two is added to the length of each skin. The gentleman's suggestion was that, since it was very difficult to stop the practice, all would be well if the person who skinned a goat alive were to subscribe four annas to the funds of the Society!

The only unpleasant thing at Hoshiarpur was the fact that bands of Akāli Sikhs were roaming that district and the Punjab generally, and one never knew when or where trouble might suddenly break out. During the previous February there had taken place the terrible massacre known as the Nankana Sahib tragedy; and a brief description of how that came about may be of interest.

All over the Punjab there are Sikh temples and shrines which are in charge of Mahants, who may be looked upon as abbots. Quite justifiably suspicion had arisen among the Sikh community that very many of these abbots were using the lands and money belonging to the shrines in their charge for their own personal

benefit; and it was decided to oust the abbots from their control.

Without resorting to the tedious procedure of the law-courts certain fanatical Sikhs commenced to take the law into their own hands. The Sikhs worship Akāl Purukh, the Supreme Being; and there was formed a body known as the Akāli Dal, the Army of God, portions of which marched about the country taking forcible control of temples and shrines.

One of the most wealthy and important shrines was that called Nankana Sahib. The Mahant became nervous, and not obtaining the support he had hoped for from Government hired a posse of Pathan bravoes to act as a guard. One day a body of Sikhs marched into the enclosure of the shrine, and the Pathans started firing upon them from the roofs, finishing off the massacre with swords and then drenching the corpses with kerosene and setting them alight.

As we knew very well, there was always the chance of something similar happening elsewhere, and it was a relief when on the pretext of manœuvres a small force of troops was drafted into the district.

Ws spent a month in Lahore before sailing, and so witnessed the arrival there of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales (now the Duke of Windsor), who was making a tour of India.

Though there was, of course, no feeling whatever against the Prince himself, certain agitators had chosen this as a good time for organising demonstrations, and a riot took place when he reached Bombay and another when he reached Madras. He could scarcely help feeling annoyance at this, and according to a member of his Staff he uttered a very characteristic remark: "I think I shall send my father a wire: '*My visit here great success. Only two hundred killed and injured!*'" Needless to say, no such telegram was ever sent!

## LAND OF NO REGRETS

There were sometimes anxious moments for his Staff: once, when becoming bored with an evening party in some State he disappeared into the darkness on an elephant, and on another occasion when, owing to some signalling error, his special train started off down the line removing him and his host, a Ruling Chief, who was sitting talking to him in his railway carriage.

At length the time came for us to depart. Our packing was finished, and we had bade farewell to our many friends—friends whom we had known for so many years in the intimate fashion in which one knows one's friends in India.

Both of us felt sorrow at leaving our old Indian servants, good fellows, some of whom had been with us for nearly twenty years, ready for uncomplaining service at all hours of the day or the night. Some of them are still our pensioners for small amounts, and they write to us at Christmas.

At times, counting my wife's rickshaw-coolies in the hills and my punkah-coolies in the plains, there were about thirty of them; for each pony must have his syce and his 'grass-cut,' and so on! The Mohammedan servants adored our cat—did not a cat once save the life of the Prophet Mohammed?—and one of them, when his new master visits Kashmir, writes to tell us that he has put flowers on 'Kitty's grub' (grave). 'Kitty' travelled with us everywhere for just under twenty years, and lies buried in the Residency garden. Everyone knew him; and when he was inadvertently left behind in his box at Kalka station he was sent on to us in Simla provisioned by some kind Indian friend with a saucerful of what looked like cold macaroni, at which he had turned up his aristocratic nose!

Then, there is old 'Cookie'. He was with us for

ages, and his powers as a *chef* would have done credit to many a first-class London restaurant. His monthly bills, according to the immemorial custom of the East, swelled in proportion to my promotion in the Service. Each Christmas he sends us a mighty and luscious plum-cake. I have no hesitation about accepting it, because I know that it has not cost him one anna. It is paid for by numerous small monthly additions to the bills of his new employer; and I sometimes wonder how many plum-cakes I supplied to some total stranger who had employed him before he entered my service!

It is a mistake to imagine that the solemn-faced Indian servitor has no sense of humour. He can enjoy a joke as well as his master. Witness the case of an old grey-bearded table-servant of a friend of mine, a judge of the Punjab High Court. When at a dinner-party the time for drinks had arrived, the astonished guest would find standing at his elbow Mahomed Baksh who, well trained in the part, would offer him with a countenance totally devoid of expression:—" *Lāl sharāb* (red wine—claret)—whisky *sharāb*—or (in one word) Beer-beergloriousbeer."

The man who said that the best view in India was that of Bombay from the stern of a homeward-bound vessel was a bilious idiot.

I spent thirty good years in India, and I still thank her for them. No one but a hypocrite would affirm that the young Englishman sails for India with the idea of benefiting that country. He goes in the spirit of adventure for a career, for substantial pay (though few of us bring much of it home!), for sport and with an eye to a pension. After he has settled down, the country, the life and the people begin to get a grip on him. When Kipling wrote about hearing 'the East a-callin', he knew what he was doing.

Because our adventurer is an Englishman, he does

his job; and very often a great deal more than his job officially demands of him. All over India are the graves of men who have died in cholera-camps, on famine-works, in lonely stations and on the frontier because they would not spare themselves in the cause of their Indian fellow-subjects whose friends, as well as rulers, they were. Kipling's remarks about them and about politicians in 'On the City Wall' are worth reading.

If I have been able to do India some service, I count myself lucky. It might have been my lot to pass through an uneventful existence in England. I might even have become in time a politician meddling with India instead of serving her! I have said hard things about politicians, because I do not like them; and I am quite certain that they would intensely dislike me. But when one has been East and has become proud of the work that Englishmen do there, when one has been uplifted with the glamour of the British Empire, it incenses one to find these complacent gentlemen solemnly deliberating how best to lose that Empire or give portions of it away!

What I am now about to write may justly be considered pure 'swank'.

My retirement was not actually gazetted until 1924, and soon after the gazette came a letter from Field-Marshal Sir William Birdwood. He was at the time G.O.C.-in-C. Northern Command in India; and it was just like him to find the time to write to an ordinary Indian Army colonel who was commencing (as we say in the flowery vernacular of Hindustan) to 'eat his pension'. The passage in that letter of which I am most proud runs thus:—"The Indian Army is the loser in having said good-bye to one who certainly did his best towards the cause of a 'Brighter India'."

## CHAPTER XXII

My friends often ask me: "What of the Future in India?" Not being a crystal-gazer I cannot tell them. I imagine there will be much more trouble there.

Many of us, however, believe that in Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy, and Lord Zetland, the Secretary of State for India, we have two men who will not let either England or India down.

About Lord Linlithgow there is this pleasant little anecdote. When Viceroy-designate he bought a fine big horse to take to India with him, and it was trained by the Police to take no notice of crowds, cheering, explosions and the like. But Lord Linlithgow was not satisfied: in India it might chance to find a camel on one side of the road, and an elephant on the other. So it was sent to the Zoo to be trained between a camel and an elephant!

I understand that his family still chaff him about this; but what one admires is a Viceroy who can be so thorough.

Of Lord Zetland we have pleasant memories of the time when he was A.D.C. to Lord Curzon; and he has the inestimable advantage, all too rare in a Secretary of State, of possessing a real knowledge of the East. India has surely had her fill of well-meaning idealists and aged philosophers philosophising in their libraries?

In this connection one cannot pass by unnoticed the delightful definition of the Secretary of State given by an Indian candidate at an examination for the Indian Civil Service. Asked to describe that personage's duties he in all good faith described him as the man "who appoints and *disappoints* every official in India!"

As regards the future of India, so very much depends on the attitude of British statesmen and of the Indian National Congress.

The Congress was initiated in 1885 by Messrs. A. O. Hume and Wedderburn with the idea of interesting Indians in politics. Mr. Hume, who had retired a few years before from the I.C.S., was rather an eccentric personality, an ardent follower of occult science and an admirer of old Madame Blavatsky. It was after a dinner-party at his house in Simla that Madame performed one of her customary bits of hanky-panky about a lost brooch, which inspired Aberigh-Mackay to write one of his most amusing satires. He described how the guests, "persons of consideration in evening dress", scrabbled about in a potato-field searching for the Everlasting Verity, and how "Earth with the groans of an infinite pain, a boundless travail, yielded up a gingham umbrella."

Mr. Hume must often have been astonished at the strange growth of his baby. Admittedly, the Indian National Congress is the only really organised political body in India; which is why, I suppose, our English politicians are so anxious to truckle to it.

Its members can count among themselves the most brilliant brains in India. To me—a lover of that country, and now out of it all and able to speak my mind freely—it seems ten thousand pities that those brilliant brains, instead of being directed towards co-operation with England for the benefit of India, should be directed towards obstruction and the causing of unrest. I have a profound respect for such persons' brains; but not for their wisdom.

The most important member of the Congress Party at present is Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, whose book I have recently read. After reading it a whimsical idea occurred to me.

I saw myself, along with the Pandit, wrecked upon a desert island. We had no hope of escape, and so could speak plainly to each other as man to man. I asked him whether in his innermost heart he really believed that it would be for the benefit of the country if the English, together with the British troops, were to depart and leave India to the mercy of Russia, Afghanistan, the Frontier tribesmen and other outside invaders. His answer was:—"No, I do not think so. But as long as things continue as they are, we shall try to extract as much as possible from British politicians." I could understand this point of view, and could to a certain extent sympathise with it. I could not believe that a man of his intelligence would calmly contemplate seeing his country plunged into internecine strife, or ravaged by outside marauders. I think we should have got on quite well together.

There are so many things that Congress might do, so many subjects deserving their whole-time attention. To mention only a few: the case of the outcaste millions, the *purdah* question, the question of child-marriage, better sanitation, the thraldom of the money-lender. I am out of it all myself; but onlookers see most of the game and I regret to witness a potential source of benefit such as the Congress might be converted into a source of disaster.

Progress there must be: but surely a measure of paternal government is still no bad thing for the Indian masses? Provided they are not stirred up by agitators, they are still content with a British Rāj which gives them justice and security; they still need the 'Dipty Commissner Sahib', accessible and impartial, to apply to in times of difficulty. How can a country of divers races with different religions and customs and some two hundred different languages acquire a 'public opinion' or become one 'Indian

Nation'? New ideas and comic voting-boxes are not likely to bring this about. How long will it be before the Mohammedan and Sikh lions will lie down peacefully beside the Hindu lambs? How long will it be before Pathan soldiery will be content to serve under a Hindu Commander-in-Chief? And if we look at the question purely from the point of view of England, what place in world politics will she occupy if we lose or abandon India? Will she any longer deserve the respect of the self-sufficing Dominions?

The most heartening news about the new *régime* comes from my old Province, the Punjab. The Punjab breeds 'Men', and when men of good-will sit round a table as equals, anxious with mutual respect to understand one another, they can achieve wonders. Criticisms of proposed measures there may be—and why not?—that is what they are there for. But it is decent, constructive criticism; not criticism born of a peevish desire merely to obstruct. Discussions can take place in an atmosphere of good humour lightened by some English or Indian member cracking a joke.

One of the difficulties for ever confronting the administration in India is the possibility of communal outbreaks: and who is there besides the English to hold the balance impartially between Hindu, Mohammedan and Sikh?

It takes so little to start the trouble. It may result from the killing of a cow; from the noise made by the music of a Hindu band blaring past a Mohammedan mosque during prayer-time. It may be that the *tazias* (those miniature representations of the tombs of the martyred brothers Hasan and Husain) carried in procession during the Mohammedan festival of the Muharram have grazed the branches of the trees belonging to a Hindu temple. There will follow abuse and brawling ending in a bloody riot.

An exasperated old lady may clip the small son of a neighbour over the head with a shoe: then there has taken place 'the insult of the shoe', and serious trouble is likely to follow. This matter of the 'shoe' in India merits a few moments of discussion.

In England we tie an old shoe to the bride's car for luck; but when a few years ago the portrait of the King-Emperor was carried through an Indian cantonment festooned with old shoes, it was not merely an exhibition of gross bad taste, but the deadliest insult which oriental imagination could devise directed against Great Britain through the august person of her Sovereign.

No Indian or European entering a temple or mosque may wear his leather shoes, no matter how high may be his rank. "*Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground*" is an Eastern injunction that was not prescribed yesterday.

No Indian servant enters his master's house wearing his shoes: shoes must be left outside in the verandah. The servant waiting at table goes bare-foot or wearing socks. In a London theatre I once saw an amusing misconception of this old-established custom. It has long been the rule that Indian gentlemen, should they so desire, when paying official calls may wear shoes of patent leather. It is a rule which satisfies everyone, though old-fashioned Indian gentlemen often do not avail themselves of it. Someone had apparently spoken of this to the late Sir George Alexander, when he was presenting that excellent play, *The Witness for the Defence*. The first act took place in a tent in Rajputana; and to the amusement of Anglo-Indians in the audience the Indian table-servants, immense fellows with huge black beards, were seen to be shod with dancing-pumps!

I return to more serious matters. Not long ago in a certain Indian State there was an amazing example of

caste bigotry. No lives, fortunately, were lost, but there was a great destruction of property. And the cause of the rioting was simply this, that certain of the higher classes objected to the *chamārs*, the lowly leather-workers, adopting customs to which they were not supposed to be entitled! The *chamārs* had begun to wear coloured clothes, they had put silver anklets on their women-folk, they were constructing porticos and using double-leaved doors, they were using stringed seats in their bullock-carts, and so on! Truly, in India the plight of the under-dog is a hard one!

The Bombay riots of some time back, which lasted for nearly ten days, were much more serious. They arose from the demolition of a small Hindu prayer-hall by the Bombay Corporation, which constructed a similar hall somewhat nearer to a mosque. The Mohammedans objected that the singing of Hindu hymns interfered with their prayers in the mosque. There took place mass rioting, the looting of shops and burning of temples and mosques. There was firing by the police and by British and Indian troops before order was finally restored.

But these riots were of small account compared with the ghastly tragedy which occurred in Cawnpore only six years ago. A young Punjab revolutionary, who had flung a bomb from a gallery at the Government benches of the Legislative Assembly and had also been implicated in the murder of a British police-officer, was sentenced to death and was executed. In memory of the so-called 'martyr' the Cawnpore Congress Committee proclaimed a procession of mourning. The Mohammedans saw no reason for taking part in it; and Hindus and Mohammedans came to blows. Murder, arson and looting went on for three days, there were hundreds of dead, temples and mosques were desecrated and burnt, children were torn limb

from limb, unborn children were cut from their mothers' bodies.

In London several years ago there was exhibited a film entitled 'Intolerance'. It would not be impossible to make a similar film in India to-day.

Of recent years there have been serious communal riots in Oudh between Hindus and Mohammedans, and in Lahore between Mohammedans and Sikhs. There have been very many minor troubles of the same kind in different parts of the country. Yet we find Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, when addressing a London audience, stating:—"Religious hostility has very little to do with the communal question. . . . There is a slight background of religious hostility, which has in the past sometimes given rise to conflicts and sometimes to broken heads in the case of processions and so forth, but the present communal question is not a religious one, though sometimes it exploits religious sentiment and there is trouble. It is a political question of the upper middle classes which has arisen partly because of the attempts of the British Government to weaken the national movement or to create rifts in it, and partly because of the prospect of political power coming into India and the upper classes desiring to share in the spoils of office."

The latter portion of this statement is significant: any stick is good enough with which to beat the British Government! I prefer to accept the conclusions of the writer who declared: "The cause is religious. The Hindu peasant or artisan regards the Muslims as the enemies of his faith, and the Muslim of the same class holds similar views in respect of the Hindus. . . . Undoubtedly the approach of a new system under which in some places a Muslim minority will be under the control of a Hindu majority, and in others a Hindu minority will be under a similar Muslim control has

accentuated the existing antagonism. But the antagonism is always there." Mohammedan methods of proselytising during the Moplah riots will be remembered; and I remember too the remark of a Mohammedan to a Gurkha officer who had become a Christian: "Now you have come half-way!" Religious zealotry knows no bounds in the East.

Against such difficulties the Indian Police strive manfully. I think that Sir Samuel Hoare, late Secretary of State for India, once described the Indian police-officer as a 'celluloid dog chasing an asbestos cat through the streets of Hell.' There might be another definition of the Indian Police. If, as a British statesman once remarked, the Indian Civil Service are the 'steel frame' of the administration, the Indian Police might be styled the 'iron frame'. But the 'iron frame' will only stand the strain as long as it is stiffened by its British officers.

In this connection I may remark that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, according to newspaper reports, has recently been appealing to the Indian Police to realise that they now owe allegiance to Congress Ministers. What the effect of this will be in the event of further communal trouble or a fresh attempt at a revolution remains to be seen.

There is one menace threatening India, against which not only England but the Indian National Congress likewise must be on guard. Over the country there hangs like a pall the stinking cloud of Communism, the cloud rising from the hell-broth simmering all over the peninsula.

The Foreign Secretary was recently asked by a Member of Parliament whether the British Government hold the Soviet Republic responsible for the actions of the Third International? Mr. Eden's reply,

naturally, was non-committal; but can any sane person credit the story that the Soviet Republic is quite separate from, and has no control over, the Third International? From time to time Moscow promises that there shall be no more anti-British propaganda; but does Moscow, having set its hand to the plough, ever relax its grip on the handle?

Modern Communism dates from about 1848, the time of Karl Marx and Engels, and may be briefly defined as 'Class War'. It has travelled much farther than even its progenitors expected.

The Third International came into being in 1919. Among its bloody, revolutionary aims are the destruction of all religion, which it calls 'the opium of the people', and the establishment of revolutionary 'cells' among the public services. One of the difficulties about combating the evil is due to the diligence of the Communist: whereas the normal person, after his day's work is done, looks for some healthful exercise or pleasant mental relaxation, the professed Communist is content to make his work a whole-time job; his idea of recreation consists in secret planning and plotting. He will sit up all night to do it, while men of good will are asleep.

As regards the activities of Communists in India, I have friends, both English and Indian, who write to me; but most of my information has been gathered from the published judgments of the courts which tried the Meerut and Bombay cases, to which I shall refer. In the immensely long judgment of the Sessions Judge who tried the Meerut case it was shown that there was abundant evidence to prove that the Communist International of Russia had selected India as a suitable place for a further advance towards a bloody revolution.

About one thing there can be no possible doubt: a

bloody revolution in India is being aimed at. The only question is: when will it come? Out of Terrorism emerged Communism; and from Communism will re-emerge Terrorism. It would seem to be merely a question of time.

Under the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1908 (as amended in 1932) the Communist Party of India was notified in 1934 as an unlawful organisation; but without a doubt it continues its work in secret. During the same year the All India Congress Socialist Party came into being; but it appears that Mr. Gandhi did not look upon it with a favourable eye. About it discord seems to have arisen between him and Pandit Jawarharlal Nehru, and an idea got about that Gandhi was only out to get concessions from Government for the benefit of the upper classes. However this may be, the Indian National Congress itself is in none too safe a position with regard to the Communists. From the Bombay judgment it is clear enough that they hate and despise Gandhi and think but little of the Pandit. For Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, head of the 'All India Women's Conference' they have nothing but contempt.

If Communism were to get the upper hand, it would be good-bye to the Indian National Congress; and one trembles to think what would then be the state of affairs in India, were she denuded of British troops.

In England most people can appreciate at its true value both the wickedness and the nonsense of Communism: it is much more easy to delude India's ignorant millions by promises of "when the day comes——!" One of the safeguards is the belief of the peasantry in the British 'Dypti Commissner Sahib' as a kind of minor god. Provided he be strong and just and humane, and tours his district freely, the peasantry are likely to prefer him to the agitator. For one thing, he does not have to talk to them about "when the day

comes——!” He can make good his promises speedily.

But there are so many agencies available for the spreading of Communist tenets in India. From Afghanistan Bolshevik ideas can spread to the Frontier Province, and from there to British India. In 1930 took place the attempted ‘Red Shirt’ rebellion, when Peshawar city was for some ten days in the hands of the revolutionaries.

Across the border in the tribal hills dwell the ‘Hindustani Fanatics’, a community of implacable, anti-British Mohammedans, who it was hoped would head a rising of the Frontier tribes in connection with the ‘Silk Letter’ plot of 1915. The plot originated in Kabul, whence letters written on silk were issued for the purpose of stirring up Mohammedans.

Then again, there is the ‘*Ghadr*’ (Mutiny) Party, with its headquarters still in San Francisco, and with a branch at Kabul. Moscow welcomes members of the Party and trains them. The ‘*Ghadr*’ newspaper still circulates. One hears of bands of disaffected Sikhs still returning to India from the U.S.A. and Canada. In the U.S.A. the Civil Disobedience campaign of Mahatma Gandhi has had reactions. Are there not grounds for believing that the Indian seditious of San Francisco, Kabul and Moscow are in communication with each other?

And not infrequently Bolshevism is aided by the law’s delays. A long-drawn-out trial affords magnificent opportunity for advertisement and notoriety, for the expounding at inordinate length in open court of the dangerous tenets of the persons under trial. This was particularly noticeable in what is known as the Meerut Conspiracy case. Despite the pronouncement of the Rowlatt Committee that “it is of the utmost importance that punishment or acquittal should be speedy”, that trial under the ordinary processes of the

law dragged its slow length along for *nearly four years*. And the long duration of the trial was one of the reasons given for reducing on appeal the sentences awarded by the Sessions Judge, with the result that within three years from the date of those sentences all the miscreants concerned were once more at liberty to resume their mischievous activities.

In the Meerut case some of the accused were English Communists; the judgment of the Sessions Judge filled some 700 printed pages; and it was definitely found that behind all the trouble lurked Moscow. From Moscow came the plan of campaign along with agents and finance. It was proved that Bombay, Bengal, the United Provinces and the Punjab were to work under the Communist Party of India, the aim of which was to overthrow in India the sovereignty of the King-Emperor.

Perhaps the most interesting information about the Communist Party in India is contained in the judgment of the Chief Presidency Magistrate of Bombay, which was delivered in June of 1936.

We find that the most prominent revolutionary in alliance with the Party was the notorious Hindu seditionist M. N. Roy. In many parts of the globe he had prosecuted his nefarious designs. From Berlin he returned to India to form his own 'group'; he was forced to leave India speedily in 1915; in 1925 he was expelled from France. He married an American wife, who shared his Communistic views. He had wrought incalculable harm by the time he was eventually arrested, tried and sentenced to imprisonment.

From the judgment we learn that the Party distributes an unauthorised news-sheet called *The Communist*; and another of its publications is the *Kranti* (Revolution), the organ of the 'Workers' and Peasants' Association'.

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The Punjab Branch circulates a cyclostyled news-sheet, which is distributed in Lahore and Amritsar and other large towns. One of the organisers of this Branch was a Moscow-returned Sikh, who was himself a member of the 'Ghadar' Party; while another had visited America, Canada and Moscow. There are grounds for suspicion that the Communist Party in India is in touch with Geneva—that Mecca of the Pacifists and hot-bed of trouble. The idea of forming the Party originated in Moscow, and the first Communist Conference was held in Cawnpore as far back as 1925.

The Party aims at establishing in India a Communist State on the model of the Third International as established in Russia—a Bolshevik Government, in fact. Its creed comprises bloody and violent revolution, the overthrow of capitalism and landlordism and the creation of proletarian parties. There is to be complete national independence and a dictatorship of the proletariat on the basis of the Soviet power.

There was produced in the course of the trial abundant documentary evidence showing the working of an 'underground' organisation, the projected formation of 'factory cells', and the means contemplated for getting at mill-hands (there are many such in Bombay), villages and streets, traders and even house-wives!

There exist a 'Draft Platform of Action' and a 'Battle Chart'; and among other things advocated besides the violent overthrow of British Rule are:—

- i) The cancellation of all debts.
- ii) The nationalisation of British banks, railways, factories, plantations, etc.
- iii) Abolition of the Indian States and Princes.
- iv) Abolition of the property of Churches.
- v) The establishment of a Workers' and Peasants' Soviet Rule.

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The 'Red Trades Union Congress' appears to be a congress of workmen with Communist leaders devised to help on Communist propaganda.

The Indian National Congress and Mr. Gandhi are condemned as being " betrayers of the Workers' cause"; and a Bengali leaflet is careful to point out that the 'Red Trades Union Congress' is *not* the Gandhi Congress. So long as Congress were useful, it would be used, no doubt: after that it would be 'abolished' like everything else!

A book has just appeared, entitled *The White Sahibs in India*, for which the President of the Indian National Congress, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, has written a foreword. As a writer in the *Morning Post* points out, the writer of the book paints British Imperialism in the blackest colours. The chapter headings are typical of its contents: 'The Bloody Sceptre', 'Birds of Prey and Passage,' and so on. The Pandit certainly admits that he does not agree with all that the writer says, yet he recommends the book for perusal!

The book is interesting in that it presents an absolutely one-sided view of British rule in India. It was especially interesting to me, because I discovered in it mention of myself. I had had no idea that I was so important.

What impelled the writer to mention me was a letter (already referred to) sent by me to the *Daily Mail* in January of 1932. It was that letter which brought me the anonymous reply bracketing me with 'Brimstone Churchill' as making 'a damned fine pair'!

The writer's comment is: "It will be clear to any intelligent reader that if such a man as this is an instrument of British justice, the imprisonment of Indians without trial, as permitted by various ordinances and an old John Company "regulation" of 1818 (still in use) is merely a way of dispensing with

an unnecessary formality. A 'special tribunal' is, in fact, a legal disguise for organised vengeance."

What I should like to know is, whether the writer would include in the same category of instruments of organised vengeance their Lordships of the Privy Council who upheld the decision of my tribunal in the case of the editor of *The Tribune* newspaper? I am interested because the point about 'organised vengeance' is the one I put to Sir Walter Schwabe in the libel action of '*O'Dwyer v. Nair*'.

On two points the writer and I might agree: the 'crawling order' and the 'roll-calls of Indian students'; but the one-sidedness of the book is so manifestly apparent. There is naturally much about General Dyer; but about the horrors of the Amritsar Bank murders, the slaughtering of Guard Robinson and so forth there is no word. All that is said is this:

"Shortly before the massacre at Jallianwala Bagh soldiers had fired on a peaceful (*sic*) procession, killing some twenty persons. This resulted in reprisals in which some Englishmen were killed and considerable damage was done to property. These reprisals were made the excuse for the events which followed."

In his Author's Preface the writer says: "Those who dislike my conclusions may dispute them. But whosoever would quarrel with my facts must enter the lists with my authorities."

I will certainly enter the lists in regard to General Dyer's force at the Jallianwala Bagh. I find this statement:

"The massacre was actually perpetrated by Gurkhas (Nepalese troops from over the border) *who alone could be trusted* to fire on a mixed crowd of Hindus, Moslems and Sikhs." The italics are mine.

As a matter of fact, General Dyer's force of ninety men was composed of:

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25 rifles of the 54th Sikhs F.F. and 59th Rifles F.F.

25 rifles of the 1/9th Gurkhas.

40 Gurkhas armed only with their *kukris* (regimental chopping-knives).

Again: "Sir Michael O'Dwyer would have us believe that after the horror of Jallianwala Bagh and the Crawling Order the people of Amritsar expressed their gratitude to him for the slaughter of their kinsmen and the honour of being made to crawl on their bellies."

Yet Sir Michael did not initiate what happened at the Bagh, and procured the cancellation of the Crawling Order when he learned of it.

Elsewhere the writer says:

"The Viceroy (Lord Chelmsford) and the Governor (*sic*) of the Punjab were praised for their conduct in abetting these atrocities." There is no mention of the late Mr. Justice McCardie's opinion about those atrocities; but I suppose that he, too, was an instrument of organised vengeance!

In the course of my own book I have spoken of the menace of Communism in India, so the following observations of the author of *The White Sahibs in India* strike me as particularly worthy of consideration:

"It will be in the villages and factories, where Hindus and Mohammedans suffer from the same robberies of rent and interest, that the social revolution will find its strength, superseding nationalism in the coming years as the spearhead of Indian liberation and racial unity."

"There is little doubt that, if war does not overtake us first, the future will produce some such coalition of Liberal and Labour Reformist forces and that their banners will receive the blessings of Moscow."

"Meanwhile in India the creed of the young

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students and intellectuals, the surest index of the future, points to Communism."

In connection with Communism there is an interesting note about the notorious M. N. Roy. The book contains one joke, for which I thank the author. It concerns a man in some remote tract of India who had never heard the name of 'Gandhi', but thought that it might mean "something to eat".

Whether Russia is contemplating a massed attack by Communism on India, one does not know. But according to a newspaper paragraph eight hundred 'Red Moscow Beauties' have been given a send-off by Stalin to marry and found the "new Russia in the East". Among other things this first batch out of twenty thousand are to "teach sport" to the youth of Asia! So presumably, there's a good time coming for someone!

I know very little about Communism in England; but it seems to me that there are two types of Communists in this country, the cheerful and the morose. To the former belongs the gentleman who wrote me a postcard about some remarks of mine which had appeared in a newspaper. After chiding me for them, he ended up quite pleasantly with:—"Well, toodleoo, old Bean!" To the latter type belongs the gentleman against whom the other day I brushed (not bumped) in the Strand. I dare say my hat may have been slightly better than his—but not much. However, I suppose he chose to look upon me as one of the 'Idle Rich'. I glanced at him as we brushed together, and a sallow face glared up at me balefully. "Yus, yer may well look!" it snarled. "Yer bloody old swine!"

## CHAPTER XXIII

HAVING bade farewell to India we settled down in 1922 in the fair county of Sussex, in the quaint little ancient cobble-stoned town of Rye, which we had known during the War.

Not long afterwards my wife and I took part in a performance which I shall always regard as one of the most amusing in which I have had a share.

It was the Oxford Pageant. I had witnessed many scenes of pageantry in India, but it seemed to me that anything of the kind in England ought to compare favourably with *durbārs* and functions of that description, and that a special effort should be made.

Some Anglo-Indian friends of ours had invited us to visit them at Oxford and undertake the rôles of 'Lord and Lady Burleigh', the special attraction for the public being Lady Oxford in the rôle of 'Queen Elizabeth', a part which I may say at once she fulfilled to perfection.

The pageant was to take place in June; and the end of May being very cold, I stipulated when hiring two expensive costumes in London that they should be such as would insure us against being frozen alive. My wife was provided with a magnificent velvet dress which had been worn by some film star, and my outfit included a cloak heavily trimmed with fur. As it turned out, the Pageant-day proved to be the hottest day of the year, and 'Lord Burleigh' had reason to thank his stars that gentlemen of Elizabethan times wore tights.

Imagining that there would be a previous rehearsal of two, we reached Oxford a few days before the

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pageant. For some reason or other there was no rehearsal, and when the time came we had no notion as to what we were expected to do.

The affair was to take place in the beautiful grounds of Worcester College; and on the day appointed we went there ready-dressed to find awaiting us a very irritable 'Queen Elizabeth'. And her Majesty had good grounds for her annoyance! Though she had come specially from London for the event, no one apparently had met her at the station, and no one had been on hand to meet her at the College.

While we sat waiting for something to eventuate, I watched with interest the efforts of a young gentleman who obviously never having heard of spirit-gum was endeavouring to affix a moustache to his upper lip with the aid of soap. He was wearing a tousled red wig, and I took him to be representing either an Anglo-Saxon king or Judas Iscariot. To my astonishment I found that he was intended to be 'Sir Walter Raleigh'.

In due course, exhorted angrily by her Majesty to "Come on! Come on!", we shuffled in a disorderly mob through an archway into Worcester grounds, and were immediately swallowed up in a crowd of some thousands of spectators. There were no ropes to keep the onlookers back, so our procession straggled along somewhat in this order:—

Queen Elizabeth of England.

Two old charwomen out for the day.

Three young gentlemen in gent's boaters and blazers..

Lord and Lady Burleigh.

One lone charwoman.

Sir Walter Raleigh,

and so forth. It was an amazing spectacle!

On we went till we reached a spot about which the printed programme said:—"Here there will be an attack of highwaymen upon the Queen and Court." In as much space as the throng would allow them a fencing-master and two pretty little actresses in doublets and hose gave a brief exhibition of cut-and-thrust. The two highwaymen fell dead, and were carried off; and, as I learned afterwards, the fencing-master returned to London minus one rapier and two daggers over which the crowd had swarmed and removed them as souvenirs.

On we went again till we encountered the Mayor and Corporation of Oxford. As none of us knew where to go, we all struggled about till we found sticking out of the turf a low wooden dais. There was no canopy over it, and it was devoid of seating accommodation, but the programme said:—"Here the Queen and Court will sit and witness the Old English Masque." Someone found for Queen Elizabeth an old kitchen chair, and the Court grouped themselves round it. As the dais seemed likely to be a good vantage-point, a portion of the crowd came and stood with us.

There was considerable delay, and Queen Elizabeth was heard to mutter:—"Unless this Masque starts soon, I'm off!" Not long afterwards she was off—and so was the Pageant.

I sat for a while under a tree smoking and watching the thirsty multitude trooping back into Oxford for cold drinks, the supply in the grounds having given out. In search of them I and my friends went home, and there came the climax of the day. The servants had gone to the pageant, and had taken the house-keys: so, perspiring profusely, Lord Burleigh propped a ladder against the wall while an athletic young lady entered the house through a bathroom window!

We made one trip to 'Sunny Algeria', where it rained almost incessantly for three months on end.

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Every now and again one turned up at a horrible junction named Krubs, which looked like its name. There was no overhead shelter, and a small Arab boy spread a strip of American cloth on the mud for one's baggage, and one sat on the baggage till a train came. Part of the time we spent in a delightful little French hotel set in an orange and lemon garden at Hammam Meskoutine, where hot geysers bubble out of the ground. But it kept on raining, and almost the only amusement was conversation with the elderly French-woman who looked after the geyser-baths and cherished (until it died) a tiny hare in one of her old slippers in the hot-cupboard.

During the years that followed we paid several visits to Monte Carlo, usually going on to Alassio in Italy for sun-bathing from the pleasant 'Villa Iris'. There sometimes Sir Herbert Barker, the famous manipulative surgeon, and his charming wife were fellow-guests; and this book is adorned with a photo of him standing on his head on the Alassio sands.

One of the most cheery personalities at Monte Carlo in those days was the late Sir Walter De Frece who married that fine actress, Miss Vesta Tilley; and it was in his company that I partook of a Lucullan banquet. A number of wealthy sportsmen had formed themselves into a club which royally entertained the competitors in motor-races, boxing tournaments and similar competitions. On one occasion when there were motor-races I was a guest; and having taken a ticket on the winner on the totalisator I was very cheerful. Owing to some mistake only one of the seventeen racing-drivers attended the dinner, an Englishman whose car had been burnt the day before; so he and I and a French general were the only guests. After partaking of the most marvellous food and wines, we sat for a while listening to Walter De Frece telling

imitably negro stories; and then adjourned to the Sporting Club for a mild gamble. At a very late hour he and I walked back in the moonlight, and I left him at the entrance of his palatial block of flats.

At the Royalty Bar next morning he told me of his final adventure. Over and over again he had pressed the lift-button, but the lift had refused to operate. Just then a friend had entered and said that he was not surprised, since the button which Walter was pressing was marked '*Descente*'! They went up together, and the friend stopped the lift at his flat, which was the one below Walter's, and got out. Walter said:—"Thanks so much, old chap, for coming to the rescue. Good-night!"—after which he pressed a button and was immediately taken to the bottom again.

In order to have some useful employment in Rye I took up the working of the British Legion Branch there. In this little town and its immediate environs we have more than four hundred members, and we endeavour to bear in mind the motto of that great association of ex-Service men, which is '*Service, not Self*'.

One of my proudest moments was when I and another official were invited to take charge of the Indian Princes assembled for the India Conference at the Legion's Armistice Night celebration at the Albert Hall. My party included such notabilities as H.H. the Agha Khan, the young Maharaja of Kashmir and the ever-to-be-lamented 'Ranji'. Filing down the steps on either side of the great organ, preceded by the Star of India banner, we led them across the great hall amid the shouts of the multitude of ex-Service men:—"Good old Ranji!"—"Good old Agha Khan!" Many of them, no doubt, had backed the latter's horses. After the Princes had been introduced to that great Patron of the Legion, H.R.H. the Prince of Wales (now the Duke of

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Windsor), we sat and watched what is annually one of the most moving spectacles in the world. Crowds outside the hall cheered the Indian Princes' departure; and when the last of their magnificent Rolls Royces had moved silently away, I and my colleague, members of the so-called Ruling Race, went home in the Tuppenny Tube.

On that occasion I had the honour of being asked to write the account of the celebration for the *Legion Journal*; and my reward was a most appreciative letter from the headquarters of the American Legion at Washington.

I only once met the late Lord Jellicoe, who did such magnificent work for the Legion, in a tea-tent after the Brighton Rally. The tent was very full, and with some difficulty we managed to secure a plate of sandwiches. I left him for a few moments to talk to someone else, and by the time I returned he had absent-mindedly eaten them all.

Relief work, Poppy Day work and the like give me and my Committee plenty to do; but Rye Legion Branch can also be frivolous. On Jubilee Day we cruised, got up as pirates, through the streets in our good ship *Rotten Coffin* with guns firing fore and aft and the gunner's breeches afire. On Coronation Day we were French raiders attacking and burning a big fort which we had built on the Town Salts. Some of us were captured, and were led next day in chains through the town to be publicly tried by our Mayor, Mr. E. F. Benson, the novelist.

To my mind some of the best work done lately by the Legion has been the arranging of meetings between British and German ex-Service men. Nothing but good can come of such meetings: they do more for Peace than the palavering of diplomatists.

I have never been able to suppress the urge to

scribble, and with my short-story writing I have been lucky. One of my best patrons was dear old Brother-Savage Greenhough Smith, who used to take my stories for the *Strand Magazine*. I have only perpetrated one novel: *The Devil's Finger*, which occupied my leisure for two years and was recently published by Messrs. John Murray. It is a Rajput romance of four hundred years ago, and was framed on an old legend of the Indian *bazārs*: a streak of honey smeared by the Devil on a door-post starts a chain of disaster. I had many good reviews, and only two adverse criticisms, one by a lady who said:—"I don't like it. But it's a good book for a boy." And another by two kind-hearted ladies, who liked the first two chapters, but wrote:—"When we came to the first fiendish torture, we could read no more!" They overlooked the fact that I had been writing about a time of splendid chivalry and primitive barbarism, when even in England Queen Elizabeth was enjoying her cock-fights and bear-baiting, and there were the rack and the thumb-screw and burnings at the stake.

For fifteen years I have had little to do with India beyond trying to make some of my fellow-countrymen know something of and take an interest in that great and wonderful land. There have been lectures to the fine young fellows of Toc H and others.

When Her Grace the Duchess of Atholl, during the Indian controversy, came to address a big gathering at Bexhill, I was asked to propose the vote of thanks. Considering that she had never visited India, I was amazed at Her Grace's grasp of her subject; and I was glad to have the opportunity of making a few remarks myself. I suggested to those present that they should not attach too much importance to Sir Samuel Hoare's pronouncement that three ex-Viceroys were of opinion that the new Constitution would benefit the Indian

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masses. This was not carping criticism, but plain common sense. For who can have less personal contact with the masses of India than a Viceroy?

By reason of his lofty position he can never meet them. He cannot, like Haroun Al Rashid, go disguised among the villagers and the common folk of the towns to learn from themselves their wishes and aspirations. Knowledge of such folk he can acquire only from the Indian *Intelligentsia*, who will not tell him too much, and from other high officials who have themselves, probably for years, been out of contact. From the day on which he sets foot in India he must live on a strip of red carpet; and I could tell of one Viceroy who, at the end of his five years tenure of office, could not speak correctly one single Indian language or pronounce correctly ordinary Indian names.

The Master-Writer on things Indian recognised this truth; and no Viceroy should be allowed to assume office without having read thoughtfully *Tods' Amendment*. For his soul's good, too, he should read the same writer's *One Viceroy Resigns* and *The Masque of Plenty*. He might also, I think, invite a Deputy Commissioner or a Collector of a district (chosen at random) to a *tête-à-tête* dinner once a month. Then he would get some really reliable information about the masses.

At the beginning of this book I was lamenting how little the ordinary person in England knows about India.

I often find my friends, who apparently believe that country to be one vast torrid jungle, exceedingly surprised to learn that in the Punjab fur coats and blazing fires are welcome at Christmastide, and that Simla and Kashmir know during the winter months the ringing whirr of skates and reflect the brilliant rays of the sun from fields of snow. I remember, too,

the remark of a lady on seeing a photograph of my wife in fancy dress:—"Oh, have you *hairdressers* in India?" When one thinks of the luxurious shops in all big towns, of the money spent on Parisian creations for Viceregal functions!

This ignorance, though lamentable in the case of the ordinary person, becomes inexcusable in the case of the politician and the writer. The politician may at any time be called upon to decide something with regard to India's future, and should surely be at pains to learn something about that country. In the case of many writers their ignorance is nothing but the result of slackness: when writing a story about India anything will do! From personal experience I know how simple a matter it is to verify one's statements. When I have written about India, I have written out of my own knowledge; but when I have laid the scene in Borneo, or the Philippines, or the Andes, I have found no difficulty in discovering someone acquainted with those parts of the world to correct my inaccuracies.

An editor, of course, is hopeless. No editor possesses knowledge of any country besides his own; and, provided the tale is a good one, has no objection to the Eskimo hero being labelled 'Patrick Macpherson Smith'. But in many a London club there sit, day after day, staring aimlessly out of the windows, elderly gentlemen who have spent collectively æons in the East; who could 'vet' those tales and keep those distinguished authors straight in respect of Indian names and customs. To do so would greatly relieve the tedium of the aforesaid elderly gentlemen, many of whom would feel honoured by being consulted. Then, why not make use of them? Why go blundering along in a fog of misapplied names and misapprehended customs; a proceeding calculated to make any elderly Anglo-Indian gnash his remaining teeth and hurl the

volume across the room before succumbing to a fit of apoplexy?

It was the late Marion Crawford, author of *Mr. Isaacs* and other fine novels, who made one of his characters, a Lancer—ye gods!—wear a ‘bearskin’ in India; but the main stumbling-blocks for many writers are provided by Indian names. They are unaware that it is possible to tell from a man’s name whether he be a Hindu, a Mohammedan or a Sikh: accordingly, the indignant Anglo-Indian reader is constantly confronted with an extraordinary hotch-potch of a name, sometimes obviously evolved from the writer’s imagination. Such an one, in the novel of a very well-known writer of adventure stories, was that of ‘Ben Abdi, the Gurkha’, whose usual response to a question was, by the way—“Ee yess, sar.” Now, any Indian Army List would have furnished the scribe with a large selection of the Gurung and Thapa names of the Gurkhas; and inquiry from any retired Gurkha officer would have resulted in dialogue less resembling that of a Jamaican negro.

A particularly flagrant case on my list of misdemeanants is that of the deceased writer of some of the best detective stories ever written. In his estimation Indian names were of no account whatever. We read of a queer creature ticketed ‘Lal Choudar’, and of another labelled ‘Achmet’, who was not, as one might imagine, a Turk, but an Indian who might rightly have been called ‘Ahmad.’ During the progress of the tale we also come across two *Sikh* troopers; one of whom, judging from his name ‘Abdullah Khan’ must have been a Mohammedan; while the other, ‘Mahomet Singh’, would seem to have been a strange hybrid of a man—a Mohammedan-Sikh, in fact! To fill the cup of inaccuracy we are likewise introduced to one ‘Ram Singh’, a Buddhist priest (good heavens!), who roams

about England searching for a stolen jewel in company with a few of his Buddhist followers—the whole astounding clamjamphrie of them being hatted with Mohammedan *fezes*!

To sundry of these novelists the word '*puja*' is as blessed a word as was '*Mesopotamia*' to the old lady! I found it in a first novel by the son of an eminent author, which was hailed by its publishers and some of the reviewers as being redolent of "the glamour of the East". One can but gasp at the picture of a Mohammedan performing the Hindu *puja* in front of a "shrine covered with marigolds." It suffices to add that this renegade from the faith of the Prophet is burdened with the ludicrous appellation 'Hindu Khan'.

A very distinguished present-day writer is responsible for the amazing statement, that "only one or two Englishwomen have been allowed to go to Kashmir!" When one recalls the gay house-boat parties and balls and gymkhana in that paradise for women, one can only wonder where on earth he acquired this piece of information? Or, was he thinking of Tibet?

An equally celebrated author, more at home amongst his Devonshire rustics, once created a hero who went forth pig-sticking on a 'Whaler'—armed, one supposes, with a harpoon! The mistake could hardly have been a printer's error, since it occurred several times; and one can only conclude that our author was ignorant of the fact that the Walers purchased for the Indian Cavalry are so-called because they are imported from New South Wales.

To a lady novelist I am indebted for the gem describing "the innocent joy of the nautch-girls at being rewarded each with a *crore* of rupees." Those of us who have had some experience of nautch-girls would find it difficult to believe in these ladies being able even

to simulate innocence; but we could readily believe in their joy, if some mad multi-millionaire were to take it into his head to reward each of them (after their singularly dull entertainment) with a present amounting to several hundreds of thousands of pounds!

Looking through my list of errors, I am compelled to the ungallant conclusion that lady-writers are the most reckless offenders in the matter of depicting 'India as She is Not'; and I cite the two following examples in support of my opinion.

The first of them occurs in a tale which, to my astonishment, I found reprinted in a collection of 'The World's Best Stories'. We are told therein of a young man, newly arrived in India from an English university, who, on his journey upcountry, steps off the train at a small wayside station to visit his father, whom he has not seen for many years. He drives from the station to his father's bungalow in a bullock-cart. Now, no European in India travels by bullock-cart; but that does not matter to our authoress! Mention of a bullock-cart supplies 'atmosphere'. On arrival at the bungalow he discovers his father stretched blind-drunk upon a bed, that being the normal condition of the Indian Civil Servant. The son's brain, doubtless sharpened by his sojourn at the university, instantly divines what has happened. The pitiable state of affairs is not really due to any fault on the part of his poor father. The solitude, the terrible heat and, above all, the tyranny of a 'Chief Commissioner' have combined to drive his unfortunate parent to desperation and the bottle!

Upon a rickety table close to the bed lies a half-written report on the revenue administration of the district, along with an angry letter from the Chief Commissioner demanding to know why the report has been delayed? The good son seats himself by the bedside

and during the night-watches, without the slightest previous acquaintance with a highly technical subject, in masterly fashion completes the report. Then follows this delicious decision on the part of the son:—"He would take the report to the Chief Commissioner himself! Yes!—and he would have a word or two to say to him!"

What one aches to know is, what the Chief Commissioner said to the good son as soon as he had recovered from his apoplectic fit!

My next example is also culled from a 'best-seller'. The monsoon has broken; a great river is in flood; a dam is likely to burst and spread devastation over the surrounding country. Horror is piled upon horror; the sluice-gates cannot be opened; and the young engineer-in-charge happens to be miles away engaged on other work. Word, however, reaches him; he rides all night through torrential monsoon rains; he arrives in the nick of time; he fishes the sluice-gate key from his waistcoat-pocket, and all is well! The mistake here, of course, consists in this—that the contrivance known as the 'key' of the sluice-gates is an apparatus of wood and iron some thirty-five feet in length.

For the authenticity of my final 'pearl beyond price' I cannot truthfully vouch. It may be *ben trovato*. All I can say is that a friend assured me that he had read it in a book written by a lady. It runs thus:—"Ishar Singh turned his face towards Mecca, and called upon the Lords Krishna and Buddha."

This certainly sounds far too good to be true; but judging from my experience I would hesitate to avow that the invention of a hero who was at one and the same time a Sikh-Mohammedan-Hindu-Buddhist was beyond the achievement of some of our gifted authoresses when writing about India!

We have several writers who can write about India

with intimate knowledge; and regarding some of them my only complaint is that for some reason or other they appear to be bent on running down their own countrymen in India. Mr. E. M. Forster's book—*A Passage to India*—is world-famous. I began to read it with intense admiration for his powers of expounding the workings of the youthful Indian mind. My admiration gave way to annoyance when I found that most of the English characters in the book were either cads or snobs. Surely, we were not all like that? But what I wish he would explain to me is, from where he got the idea for the trial scene in which a 'Bara Memsaib' tries to ride rough-shod over an Indian magistrate in his Court? I am not denying that there may be 'Bara Mems' capable of such conduct; but had such an incident occurred within comparatively modern times the Indian Press would joyfully have pilloried it from one end of India to the other; and we should have had Sessions judges, High Court judges and possibly a Viceroy intervening!

Another author with a wonderful knowledge of the Indian student is Mr. Edward Thompson; but he, too, appears to have no great affection for his Anglo-Indian brethren. To me this seems to be a pity.

India is terribly far away! In writing these reminiscences I did not set out to prove that India was a paradise. She can supply her share of discomforts: fever, mosquitoes, prickly heat, solitude, an ice-failure during the hot weather, privilege leave and furlough often hard to come by because someone else has gone sick. But England, too, has her discomforts; and in both countries a sense of humour is a help. What I wish to maintain is that English men and women can spend many years in India and look back upon them with pleasure. Let the younger generation go there and see whether I am speaking the truth.

Strange though it may seem, I miss the sunshine of India! Possibly in a previous existence I was a Parsi. In England now the worship of the sun is a growing cult, and for this we have to thank the younger generation, the hikers and the sun-bathers in their sensible shorts and bathing-suits. Not very long ago whenever there was a spell of sunshine people pulled down their blinds to keep it out of their houses, and one opened one's newspaper to read:—"Heat Wave in London. Five men dead in the City."

My days in the 'Shiny' being ended, while I 'eat my pension' I have leisure to observe the queer pageant being staged on this side of the globe. Dictators roaring at one another and everyone else; politicians discussing the best methods for ridding England of her Empire; archbishops, bishops and deans meddling and muddling with politics; emasculate tenors and husky women crooning what pass for love-songs; young gentlemen at Oxford ranting that they 'will not fight for King and Country'. As regards these latter my own belief is that, should War come, they would display as fine a spirit of courage as did their predecessors.

A friend of mine, for whose brains except when he is speaking of India I have profound admiration, told me the other day that we Anglo-Indians are accustomed to look upon India as being so important, whereas ordinary people in England "simply scream with laughter" whenever the subject is mentioned. I do not accept this view; and I shall continue to believe that India is of importance to England. I know that there are persons who consider the 'pukka sahib' and the 'old school tie' matters for ribald mirth. In India we know what we mean by a 'pukka sahib': a man who can be trusted to do his job, and who will not let you down—in other words, a 'gentleman' in the true sense

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of the word. It is some consolation to reflect that the man who jeers at the 'pukka sahib' and the 'old school tie' is probably not the one, and has no right to wear the other.

When I commenced to write this book, I stated that I should endeavour to write it "with a pleasant pen". So if any reader should think that some of my remarks have erred on the side of frivolity, I would beg him to remember that it was Dr. Samuel Johnson who said that "a man should pass part of his time with the laughers."

Ladies and Gentlemen, though I happen to be a retired Anglo-Indian, I hope that I shall not have bored you?

THE END

